VOLUME V
No. 3

SPRING,
1947

"What a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy! . . ."—*Pascal*

CHIMERA

A LITERARY QUARTERLY

EDITORS

BARBARA HOWES XIMENA DE ANGULO

Contents

The Peacock of Java: *William Jay Smith* 2
Individual and Mass Psychology: *C. J. Jung* 3
The Island of Dreams: *Alberto Moravia* 12
Sonnet: *Emily Mosser Tompkins* 24
About the Contributors 24
Austin Clarke: *Vivian Mercier* 25
Holy Fire: *Olivia Manning* 37
Vision and Revision: *W. R. Johnson* 45
Terence Died: *Joan Strong* 46
Contemporary Literature: Sweden: *Eric Sjögren* 55
The Eranos Conferences: *J. M. Hondius* 63

Published quarterly at 265 West 11th Street, New York 14, N. Y.; 50 cents a copy, four numbers for $2.00. Unsolicited manuscripts not returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Copyright 1947 by Barbara Howes
Printed by Van Vechten Press, Metuchen, New Jersey

The Peacock of Java

by William Jay Smith

I thought of the mariners of Solomon
Who, on one of their long voyages, came
  On that rare bird, the peacock
  Of Java, which brings, even
To the tree of heaven, heaven.

How struggling upward through the dark
  Lianas, they beheld the tree
  And in the tree the fan
That would become a king's embroidery.

How they turned, and on the quiet
  Water then set sail
  For home, the peacock's tail
Committed to the legends of the sea.

Individual and Mass Psychology

by C. G. Jung

THE INDESCRIBABLE events of the last decade lead one to suspect a peculiar psychological disturbance as a possible cause. If you ask the alienist what he thinks about these things, you must expect to get an answer from his particular point of view. As a scientist, however, he makes no claim to omniscience, for he regards his opinion as a mere contribution to the enormously complicated task of finding a comprehensive explanation.

When one speaks from the standpoint of psychopathology, it is not easy to address an audience which may include people who know nothing of this specialized and difficult field. But there is a simple point that you should keep in mind, namely that psychopathology of the masses is rooted in the *psychology of the individual.* Psychical phenomena of this order are investigated in the individual. It is only if one can succeed in establishing certain phenomena or symptoms that are common to a number of separate individuals, that one can begin to examine analogous mass phenomena. As you perhaps already know, I take both the psychology of the conscious and of the unconscious into consideration, which includes the examination of dreams, for these are the natural products of unconscious activity. We have known for a long time that there is a biological relationship between the unconscious processes and conscious mental activity. This relationship can best be characterised as a *compensation,* which means that any deficiency in consciousness—such as exaggeration, one-sidedness or

---

NOTE: This is the text of a broadcast read over BBC, November 3, 1946.

lack of a function—is suitably supplemented by an unconscious process.

As early as 1918, I noticed peculiar disturbances in the unconscious of my German patients which could not be ascribed to their personal psychology. Such phenomena always manifest themselves in dreams as mythological motifs. I have called these motifs—which are also to be found in legends and fairy tales throughout the world—the archetypes: i.e. typical modi in which such phenomena are experienced. There was a disturbance of the collective unconscious in every single German case. One can explain these disorders causally but such an explanation is apt to be inadequate, for it is easier to understand archetypes by their aim than by their causality. The archetypes I had observed expressed primitivity, violence and cruelty.

When I had seen enough of such cases, I turned my attention to the peculiar mental state which was then prevailing in Germany. I could only see a certain depression and a great restlessness, but these did not contradict my suspicion. In a paper which I published at that time, I suggested that the "blond beast" was stirring in an uneasy slumber and that an outburst was not impossible. Not that this condition was by any means a purely Teutonic phenomenon, as became evident in the following years. The onslaught of the primitive forces was more or less universal; the only difference lay in the German mentality which proved to be more susceptible on account of its marked tendency to mass psychology. Moreover, defeat and social disaster had increased the herd instinct in Germany, and thus it became more and more probable that Germany would be the first victim among the Western nations, namely a victim of a mass movement that was brought about by an upheaval of forces which were lying in the unconscious, ready to break down all moral control. According to the rule mentioned before, these forces were meant to be a compensation. In the case of an individual, if such a compensatory move of the unconscious is not integrated into consciousness, it leads to a neurosis or even to a psychosis, and the same would apply to a collectivity. There must be something wrong with the attitude of

consciousness for a compensatory move of this kind to be possible; something must be amiss or exaggerated, because only a faulty consciousness can call forth a counter move on the part of the unconscious. Well, innumerable things have been wrong, as you know, and opinions are thoroughly divided about them. Which is the correct opinion will only be learnt *ex effectu,* that is, we can only discover what the defects in the consciousness of our epoch are by the kind of reaction which they call forth from the unconscious.

As I have already told you, the tide which rose in the unconscious after the first world war was reflected in individual dreams as collective, i.e. mythological, symbols which expressed primitivity, violence and cruelty: in short, all the powers of darkness. Such symbols—when they occur in a large number of individuals and are not understood—begin to draw these individuals together as if by magnetic force. Thus a mob is formed, and its leader will soon be found in the individual who has the least resistance, the least sense of responsibility and, on account of his inferiority, the greatest will to power. He will thus let loose everything which is ready to break forth, and the mob will follow with the irresistible force of an avalanche.

I observed the German revolution, as it were, in the test-tube of the individual case, and I was fully aware of the immense danger involved when such people crowd together. But I did not know at that time whether there were enough of such individuals in Germany to make a general explosion inevitable. I was, however, able to follow up quite a number of cases, and to observe how the upheaval of the dark forces deployed itself in the individual retort. I could watch these forces as they broke through the individual's moral and intellectual self-control, and as they flooded his conscious world. There was often terrific suffering and destruction; but when the individual was able to cling to a shred of reason, or to maintain the bonds of human relationship, a new compensation was brought about in the unconscious by the very chaos in the conscious mind, and it could be integrated into consciousness. New symbols then appeared of a collective nature, this

time reflecting the forces of *order*. There is measure, proportion and symmetrical arrangement in these symbols which is expressed in their peculiar arithmetical and geometrical character. They represent a kind of axial system and are known as mandala-structures. I cannot explain these highly technical matters here, but I must just mention these difficult and almost incomprehensible things because they represent a gleam of hope, a thing which we need very badly in this time of dissolution and chaotic disorder.

The world-wide confusion and disorder in consciousness correspond to a similar condition in the mind of the individual; but the lack of orientation is actually compensated in the unconscious by the archetypes of order. Here again I must insist upon the fact that if these symbols are not integrated into consciousness the forces which they express will again accumulate to a dangerous degree, as was the case with the forces of disorder and destruction 25 years ago. The integration of unconscious contents is an individual act of realization, of understanding and moral evaluation. It constitutes a most difficult task, demanding a high degree of ethical responsibility. Only relatively few individuals can be expected to be capable of such an accomplishment. They are not the political but the moral leaders of mankind. The maintenance and further development of civilization depend upon such individuals. It is quite obvious that the consciousness of the masses has not advanced since the first world war. Only certain reflective minds have been enriched, and their moral and intellectual horizon considerably enlarged, by the realization of the immense and overwhelming power of evil, and of the fact that mankind is capable of being its mere tool. But average man is still where he was at the end of the first world war. Therefore, it is only too obvious that the vast majority is quite incapable of integrating the forces of order. On the contrary, it is even probable that these factors of order will encroach upon consciousness and take it by surprise and violence, that is, against our will. We can see the first symptoms everywhere: namely totalitarianism and state slavery. The value and importance of the individual are rapidly decreasing and the chances of his being heard will vanish more and more. This pro-

cess of deterioration will be long and painful, but, I am afraid, it is inevitable. Yet in the long run it will prove to be the only way by which man's lamentable unconsciousness, his childishness and individual weakness, can be replaced by a future man, who knows that he himself is the maker of his fate and that the state is his tool and not his master. But man can only reach this level when he becomes aware of the fact that, by his unconsciousness, he has gambled away the fundamental *droits de l'homme*. Germany has given us a most illuminating demonstration of the psychological development in question. There the first world war released the hidden power of evil, as the war itself was released by the accumulation of unconscious masses and by their blind desires. The so-called "Friedenskaiser" was one of their first victims and, not unlike Hitler, he voiced these lawless and chaotic desires and was thus led into war and into inevitable catastrophe. The second world war was a repetition of the same psychical process but on an infinitely greater scale.

As I said before, the upheaval of mass instincts corresponds to a compensatory move of the unconscious. Such a move became possible because the conscious state of the people had become estranged from the natural laws of human existence. It was on account of industrialisation that large parts of the population became uprooted and herded together in equally large centres, and it was due to this new form of existence—with its mass psychology and its social dependence upon the fluctuation of markets and wages—that an unstable, insecure and suggestible individual was created. This individual was aware that his life depended upon boards of directors and captains of industry, and he rightly or wrongly supposed that these were chiefly motivated by financial interests. He knew that no matter how conscientiously he worked, he could be victimized at any time by certain commercial changes which were far beyond his own control. And there was nothing else for him to rely upon. Moreover, the system of moral and political education prevailing in Germany had already done its utmost to permeate everybody with a spirit of dull obedience, and with the conviction that every desirable thing must come from

above, i.e. from those who by divine decree sat on top of the law-abiding citizen, whose individual feeling of responsibility had been overruled by a peculiar sense of duty. No wonder, therefore, that it was just Germany which fell a prey to mass psychology, though it is by no means the only nation threatened by this dangerous germ. The influence of mass psychology has spread far and wide.

It was the individual's feeling of weakness, and indeed of non-existence, which was compensated by the upheaval of hitherto unknown desires for power. It was the revolt of the powerless and the greed of the "have-nots." By such ways, the unconscious forces man to become conscious of himself. Unfortunately no categories existed in the conscious mind of the individual which would have enabled him to understand and to integrate the reaction when it reached consciousness. Nothing but materialism was preached by the highest intellectual authority. Our religious organizations were evidently simply unable to cope with this new situation, or the effect would have been visible. The churches could do nothing but protest and that did not help very much. Thus the avalanche kept on rolling in Germany and created its leader who was chosen as a tool to complete the ruin of the nation. But what was his original intention? He dreamt of a "new order." We should be badly mistaken were we to assume that he did not really intend to create an international order of some kind. On the contrary, deep down in his being he was moved by the factors of order, which began to become operative in the moment when desirousness and greed had taken complete possession of his consciousness. Hitler was the exponent of a "new order" and that is the real reason why practically every German fell for him. They intended order, but they made the fatal mistake of electing the foremost victim of disorder and unchecked greed for their leader. They did not understand that not one of them had changed his individual attitude: just as they were greedy for power, they were also greedy for order. But they remained greedy all the same. With the rest of the world, they did not understand what Hitler's significance was, namely that he was *a symbol for every individual.*

He was the most prodigious personification of all human inferiorities. He was a highly incapable, unadapted, irresponsible, psychopathic individual, full of empty, childish phantasies, but cursed with the keen intuition of a rat or guttersnipe. He represented the shadow, i.e. the inferior part of everybody's personality, in an overwhelming degree and this is another reason why they fell for him.

But what could they have done? In Hitler, every German should have seen his own personal shadow, his own worst danger. It is everybody's fate to become conscious of and learn to deal with this shadow. But how could the Germans be expected to understand this, when nobody else in the world can understand such a simple truth? The world cannot reach a state of order unless this truth can be generally recognized. But in the meantime we amuse ourselves by seeking all sorts of external and secondary reasons, though we know very well that conditions largely depend upon the way in which we take them. If, for instance, the French-speaking Swiss should assume that the Alemanic Swiss were all devils, we could have the nicest civil war in no time, and we could also discover the most convincing economic reasons why such a war was inevitable. Well—we just don't, for we learnt our lesson more than four hundred years ago. We came to the conclusion that it is better to avoid external wars, so we went home and took the strife with us. We have built up a so-called "perfect democracy" in which our warlike instincts spend themselves in the form of domestic quarrels called "political life." We fight each other within the limits of law and constitution, and are inclined to think of democracy as a chronic state of mitigated civil war. We are far from being at peace with ourselves; on the contrary, we hate and fight each other, because we have succeeded in introverting war. Our peaceful outward manners merely serve to protect our internal dispute from foreign intruders who might disturb us. Thus far we have succeeded, but we are yet far from the ultimate goal. We still have enemies in the flesh and we have not yet succeeded in introverting our political disharmonies into our personal selves. We still labour under the unwholesome conviction that we should

be at peace within ourselves. Yet even our national mitigated state of war would come to an end if everybody could see his own shadow and begin the only struggle which is really worth while, namely the fight against the overwhelming power drive of our own shadow. We have a tolerable social order in Switzerland because we fight among ourselves. But our order would be perfect if people could only take their lust for combat home into themselves. Unfortunately even our religious education prevents us from doing this, with its false promises of an immediate peace within. Peace may come in the end, but only when victory and defeat have lost their meaning. What did Our Lord mean when He said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword"?

Inasmuch as we are able to found a true democracy—namely, a conditional fight among ourselves, either in a collective or an individual form—we realize the factors of order, because it becomes absolutely necessary to live in orderly circumstances. We simply cannot afford the disturbances of external interference and complications. How can you run a civil war properly when you are attacked from without? On the other hand, when you are seriously at variance with yourself, you welcome your fellow beings as possible sympathizers with your cause and on this account you are inclined to be friendly and hospitable. But you politely avoid people who want to be helpful by relieving you of your troubles. We psychologists have learnt, through long and painful experience, that you deprive a man of his best, when you help him to get rid of his complexes. You can only help him to become sufficiently aware of them to start a conscious conflict with himself. Thus the complex becomes a focus of life. Anything which disappears from your psychological inventory is apt to turn up in the disguise of a hostile neighbour, where it will inevitably arouse your anger and make you aggressive. It is certainly better to know that your worst adversary is right in your own heart. Man's warlike instincts are ineradicable and therefore a state of complete peace is unthinkable. Moreover, peace is uncanny because it breeds war. True democracy is a highly psychological organization which takes human nature into account as it is, and therefore makes

allowances for the need of conflict within its own national frame.

When you now compare the actual German mentality with my argument, you can appreciate the simply enormous task with which the world is confronted. We can hardly expect the demoralized German masses to realize the import of psychological truth, no matter how simple it is. But the great Western democracies have a better chance in this respect, in so far as they can keep out of external wars that always tempt them to believe in external enemies and in the desirability of internal peace. Their marked tendency to internal trouble is the very thing that can lead them on the path of great hope. But I am afraid that this hope will be delayed by powers that still believe in the opposite process, namely in the destruction of the individual and in the increase of the fiction which one calls the state. The psychologist firmly believes in the individual as the sole carrier of mind and life. Society or the state derive their quality from the individual's mental condition, for they are constituted by individuals and their organizations. No matter how obvious this fact is, it has not yet permeated collective opinion enough for people to refrain from using the term "state" as if it referred to a sort of super-individual who was endowed with inexhaustible power and resourcefulness. The state is expected nowadays to accomplish easily what nobody would expect from an individual. The dangerous incline leading down to mass psychology begins with this plausible thinking in big numbers and powerful organizations, where the individual dwindles away to mere nothingness. Yet everything that exceeds a certain human size evokes equally inhuman powers in man's unconscious; namely, totalitarian demons are called forth, instead of the realisation that all which can really be accomplished is an infinitesimal step forward in the individual's moral nature. The gigantic increase of our weapons' destructive power forces the psychological problem upon mankind: Is the mental and moral condition of the men who are to decide upon their use, equal to the enormity of the possible consequences?

The Island of Dreams

by Alberto Moravia

On the twentieth day after we set sail, we sighted in the distance the Island of Dreams; or rather, we heard it. Because, even before seeing the mountains of the island loom on the horizon, we heard, vast and endless as the sky, the snoring of the strange monster who governs the island and whose name is Zzzzz. This name may seem queer to you at first sight and its etymology mysterious. In reality, it is only an onomatopoeic expression which imitates to perfection the loud noise coming from the inner recesses of the palace of the sleeping monster. It may also seem funny, like a Bronx cheer; but I can' assure you that in the mouths of the inhabitants of the island, who never utter it without a peculiar tone of terror mingled with awe, it has a particularly gloomy sound.

As we drew near the island, as its numerous cities, fields and mountains came into sight, the snoring grew. It filled the air with its dull and vibrant sound, it seemed to blend with the light of the sun; and, with the sunlight, in spite of the purity of the blue sky, the calm splendor of the sea, and the beauty of the countryside, it seemed to link an inexpressible and oppressive gloom. The inhabitants, as we soon noticed, are accustomed to it and no longer pay any attention; besides, they have many other things to worry about, as you will presently see. But the unwarned traveler is at first amazed by it, then he rebels; finally, unable to stand that inordinate and threatening snore any longer, he tries to escape as best he can. The majority plug their ears with wax; others strive to overcome that dismal sound with others more

cheerful: music, songs, convivial jollity; and all, of course, attempt to remain on the island as little as they can, just time enough to do their business; and they find no peace until the snoring, diminishing with the receding shoreline on the horizon, is finally lost in the immensity of the sea.

We were to take on only a supply of fresh water, so we stayed on the island only a few hours. But in that short time we learned many odd and unusual things about Zzzzz and his unfortunate subjects. I shall now try to narrate these things to you as best I can.

Zzzzz, then, like the ancient Minotaur of Crete, is a monster, born, it seems, of the unnatural union between the daughter of the king and a mole. At this point I must remind you that the moles of these regions are much larger than our domestic variety. They not infrequently attain the size of a human being, but they are nonetheless blind and periodically go into hibernation as ours do. There are some people who say that some time ago the island was in the possession of these moles; and that the present inhabitants, emigrating to its shores, drove them out of their former estate. But this is a rumor based on and suggested by the origin of the present ruler rather than a historically proven fact. As to the conjugal union: the princess, strolling through the hills one midsummer day entered, by chance, the burrow of one of these moles and was seized by an unnatural infatuation for the monstrous beast lying in the depths of his underground couch, all curled up, with his snout between his paws and his eyes closed. It is related that, in order to deceive and lure the animal, which is blind only in full daylight but has keen eyesight in the dark, she had herself sewn into a mole's flayed pelt; then she pushed haunches foremost into the burrow and there, in dark underground—as Pasiphae in full sunlight with her bull—she succeeded in having herself possessed by the monstrous mole. Thus was Zzzzz conceived, in the depths of a dark and foul-smelling den, by a black, huge, fat, repulsive mole and a lustful woman of royal blood. He was born all covered with a thick fuzz, already provided with a paunch, well-armed with claws, and a large, sleepy head with enormous, pale and

wrinkled eyelids. He was born sleeping, or rather snoring; and from the noise he made derived his name.

Zzzzz's mother died of childbirth; and soon after, the princess' father, king of the island, consumed by shame and by a fatal premonition, followed his daughter to the grave. Everyone believed that the succession would go to some collateral relative, since it seemed impossible that Zzzzz, right after his birth and, to boot, always immersed in slumber, could take up the reins of government. Yet something happened which nobody expected. Zzzzz, although a mere infant and continuously dozing, seized control of the government. The manner in which he did so is ingenious and is worth telling.

It seems, then, that there was, as there is now, in Zzzzz's eternal slumber, a capacity—how shall I say?—for coercion and domination far superior to that of other governments that do not sleep, with all their police forces, their bureaucrats and their armies. I said sleep; I should better express my thought if I said dream. It is, in fact, the dreams that Zzzzz continuously has when he sleeps that give him an uncontested and, as we shall see, incontestable dominion over the inhabitants of the island. Powerful dreams, as powerful as they are ill-omened and absurd; dreams that, through a strange influence still unexplained today, at the very moment when they flit under Zzzzz's closed eyelids, become realities for the unfortunate people of the island; dreams, in short, which no one can escape, as no one, in other regions of the world, can escape the heat of summer and the cold of winter.

The first dream that revealed the baneful power of the monster and at the same time established his domination was the one which required all the notables of the island, without a single exception, to climb to the top of a certain tower of the capital and jump off. This dream is one of the most common. Who, indeed, has not dreamed at least once in his life that he has climbed to the top of some very high building and has plunged into space? But Zzzzz (and herein lies his originality) dreamed about this plunge through space not for himself, but for others, thus causing the death of all the most eminent citizens of the island. At-

tracted by an irresistible magnetic force, these unfortunate people climbed to the top of the tower and, one after the other, jumped into space and splashed, like so many rotten eggs, onto the square below. This mass suicide would perhaps have remained incomprehensible if, immediately afterwards, the monster had not had two other dreams no less significant. The first one was that the families of the dead were not only not to wear mourning clothes, but were also to rejoice at the death of their kin as if it were a stroke of great good luck. The second dream was that the ministers, who had met in urgent session precisely to decide on measures to be taken in the face of events so sorrowful and gloomy, were all of a sudden to stand on their heads, indifferent to the dignity of their respective offices and to the gravity of their persons. Upon being questioned, the ministers, as well as the wives and children of the dead, admitted that this strange behavior of theirs had been, so to speak, suggested to and imposed upon them by the deep snoring that filled the sky of the island. When, finally, the monster had a fourth dream, which consisted in having all the inhabitants of the island, as previously the ministers, go about walking on the palms of their hands, the truth suddenly gleamed in the minds of Zzzzz's subjects. The monster was dreaming, and they were irremediably at the mercy of his dreams.

Since then the monster has continued to sleep and the island lives in fear of what he may dream. The monster's dreams, it must be said, are not always so baneful and absurd as those which I have narrated. Immediately after Zzzzz seized power it so happened, for example, that all the shops on the island unexpectedly offered their wares at extremely low prices. The inhabitants realized that Zzzzz was dreaming of plenty and they rushed to the distressed shop-keepers to buy whatever they could lay their hands on. Naturally this dream was perforce followed by terrible want. But experience is of no avail; each time that Zzzzz's dream of plenty recurs, the inhabitants rush out to buy.

Or else Zzzzz dreams that all the men on the island, without distinction, must, one fine morning, take off their pants and go about their business with bare legs and buttocks. They say it is

an odd sight, not lacking in drollery, to see the streets crowded with so many trouserless men. But as soon as Zzzzz's dream changes, all those unfortunate men find themselves stunned and full of shame, half naked and surrounded by flocks of laughing and mocking women. Not infrequently, however, this dream is immediately followed by another, which compels these same mocking women to pull up their skirts brazenly to their heads, baring in full light those parts of their anatomies that modesty usually impels them to hide. It is then the turn of the men to jeer at the women or, worse still, to take advantage of this involuntary shamelessness. It is unnecessary to add how little these strange and cruel dreams of the despot contribute to the morality of the population.

A dream of Zzzzz's which returns at periodic intervals is the so-called "dream of lack of respect." One fine day the inhabitants of the island awake, animated by a kind of insolent and profanatory fury; children make grimaces at their parents, wives answer the orders of their husbands with obscene and scornful gestures, school-children throw cabbage-stalks and ordure at their teachers, servants insult their masters, magistrates see their sentences received with Bronx cheers and boos. In short, there is no one, in a position of authority or dignity, who does not suffer some gross outrage. At the same time, temples, tribunals, city halls, and all other sacred and inviolable buildings are befouled, contaminated, desecrated. Nothing is safe from the impious and iconoclastic lust, neither the hoariness of old age nor the innocence of the young, neither the sacred images of the gods nor the emblems of the nation. Then, as is to be expected, Zzzzz, in his sleep, turns over on his side; the dream vanishes and the whole island, for quite a few days, hustles and bustles, cleaning up, setting things in order and resuming its ordinary way of life.

Another frequent dream of Zzzzz's: prizes and punishments. One day, lo and behold, the inhabitants dash to the jails, throw open the gates, drag out all the thieves and murderers confined therein and confer upon them the highest honors, name them magistrates, directors, chiefs, governors. At the same time, the true

magistrates, chiefs, directors, governors, are thrown into jail and placed in chains. This same reversal of the natural order of things is to be seen, on such days, in the other activities of the island.

Each and every crime is liberally rewarded, every good action punished. Prostitutes, thieves, murderers, the impious, the ignorant, the incompetent, the stupid, are honored, adulated and borne in triumph; honest men and women, the pious, the cultured, the learned, the intelligent, see themselves persecuted, despised, hated. By a strange phenomenon of moral inversion, evil is honored and good despised.

But, once Zzzzz's dream is over, it is not without extreme difficulty and much confusion that the island thrusts back into the jails the usual guests and returns the former dignitaries to their respective offices. Meanwhile, Zzzzz sleeps.

Most singular of all dreams is the one of public works. It so happens that all of a sudden the inhabitants of a coastline city decide to build a very long, enormous pier, of which there is no need whatsoever. No sooner said than done; the credits are voted, work is begun, hundreds of laborers carry rocks, lower them into the sea; the pier grows. But at the very moment when the pier has absorbed all the wealth of the city, Zzzzz's dream changes, and the inhabitants discover that they are ruined because of that quite useless bastion of rocks. Sometimes, immediately after the construction of the pier, Zzzzz dreams that those very same inhabitants must set fire to their city. Thus the inhabitants find themselves, in the end, homeless but with an enormous pier.

Also noteworthy is the so-called "interpolation dream." This dream consists in having people repeat, at every possible moment, a certain group of words, all conveying one same meaning, which varies according to the dream. At times these words express, without exception, a senseless optimism; at others, pessimism and sadness; sometimes they are obscene words and then again, not infrequently, they have no sense at all. However, so long as the dream lasts, Zzzzz's subjects continue to repeat the selected words, parrot-like, in the fashion of a doleful tongue-twister. They say the effect is exceedingly depressing.

A comical dream was the "alphabet dream," which has remained famous in the troubled history of the island. The inhabitants of one of the main cities suddenly imagined that there was something slightly harmful and infamous in the letters of the alphabet wherever these might be found printed, written, engraved, carved, or painted. Behold everyone, then, burning books, effacing signs and inscriptions, destroying memorial tablets. The dream lasted a day or two. On awakening, or rather when Zzzzz awoke from his dream to pass to the next one, those unfortunate people found themselves with all their libraries destroyed, without any names left on their shop signs.

Zzzzz's most feared dream, which fortunately occurred only once, is the "cannibal dream." Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends, seized by a furious and unspeakably odious appetite, try to sink their teeth into one another, to devour one another. In the midst of this gruesome orgy of famished fiends, Zzzzz's dream changes and all find themselves with their teeth buried in the thighs, in the arms, in the breasts of the persons that are dearest to them.

At this point, we must make a distinction, in Zzzzz's dreams, between dreams, proper, and nightmares. The dreams seem to have a relatively more rational character and are at the same time better jointed, more prolonged and bearable. On the other hand, the nightmares in which Zzzzz indulges once in a while—perhaps because of heaviness of stomach or for some other reason—are exceedingly grim and mysterious, and compensate for their lesser duration by a greater painfulness. In other words, Zzzzz's dream permits of precise action; his nightmare, instead, seems rather to suggest a certain state of mind.

Zzzzz frequently has the nightmare that someone must begin shouting in the streets, running and waving his arms, and that others must then follow the example by shouting and gesticulating too; and finally that the whole crowd must shout and run. There is no need to describe the sad confusion of this multitude rushing in all directions, yelling and lifting their arms skywards.

Another nightmare: fear. As if applying the words of the

Apocalypse to the rich and powerful of the earth, who hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, saying to the mountains and to the rocks: "Fall upon us and hide us," Zzzzz dreams that all the inhabitants of the island must be suddenly chilled by a great fright. During this dream one can see nothing but faces blanched by fear, hair standing on end, eyes wildly staring, people seeking cover, trying to hide, to find any sort of refuge. Cities are abandoned, the inhabitants seek refuge in caves, in the mountains, in the depths of the forest. Meanwhile, all is peace and security on that blessed isle. The sun shines in the cloudless sky, the sea is calm, the winds are playful and light. But so long as the nightmare lasts, Zzzzz's snoring keeps the population in terror.

A frequently-recurring nightmare is the nightmare of remorse. Held in the grip of this most painful of all feelings, Zzzzz's subjects bite their hands, weep, tear out their hair, abandon their work and seek relief in vain by confessing to one another imaginary crimes or actions quite innocent to which, at the moment, they attribute the character of crimes. Above all, the remorse they feel seems to have no object. It is remorse plain and simple, detached from any cause or effect. Many cannot bear the torture any longer and commit suicide. This dream leaves the inhabitants limp and, one might say, stultified for several days.

Zzzzz's nightmares, besides, teach one that even pleasant feelings can be an obsession and a cause of suffering. In fact, it is enough for Zzzzz to dream that his subjects must be gay for these unfortunate people to experience all the horror of a joy as unjustified as it is frenzied. And one can see them laugh, laugh, laugh. And then dance in circles, clap hands, sing, shout, congratulate one another; in short, rejoice. Rejoice in what? Nobody knows. They rejoice in spite of themselves, they rejoice with unspeakable suffering. They rejoice until they drop in a dead faint. It is to be noted that this nightmare, like all those suggesting positive feelings, is accompanied by the clear realization, on the part of the victims, that they are doing an absurd and improper thing; a realization which, indeed, confers on the nightmare its oppressive character.

The nightmare par excellence, which bears Zzzzz's unmistakable trademark, is the one which is commonly known as the nightmare of apathy. It consists in causing a universal indifference, languor, inertia—in short, an utter lack of any feeling whatsoever —to prevail suddenly over the minds of the inhabitants of the island. They feel no more love, no more hate, no ambition or desire, no hope or despair. Like so many sails suddenly deprived of wind, falling limp in the midst of a vast, becalmed sea, they feel abruptly drained of all emotion, destitute of passion, frustrated, unfeeling. Their actions become, as it were, mechanical; their behavior, of necessity, hypocritical. Like old men from whom life has withdrawn its sap, they try in vain to squeeze from themselves a drop of feeling. In short, it is death within life; or rather, death that imitates and mimics life. They say that this nightmare is one of the most unbearable because it gives one the conviction that it will last forever. Fortunately, however, everything has an end; even Zzzzz's nightmares.

We asked why in creation the whole island submitted so docilely to such a tyranny. They answered us that although everyone agrees that Zzzzz's rule is evil, nevertheless nobody would ever think of attempting to dethrone him. He is the son of a king; and religion, which on the island is very strong, forbids even the thought that he might be removed.

The inhabitants continue to hope that Zzzzz will sleep without dreams or nightmares, that he will sleep a black, uneventful sleep. It is, in fact, on the rare occasions when there is a let-up in the destructive hailstorm of absurd, foolish, cruel dreams, that the island breathes freely again, attends to its affairs, business picks up, the arts flourish, and peace, serenity and security reign once more. It happens at times that these fortunate periods, during which Zzzzz does not bother with the government of the island and is satisfied with sleeping a dreamless sleep, are long and last two, three or even five years. The inhabitants speak of these epochs as rare and privileged moments in their tormented existence, and they say: "In the time when Zzzzz did not dream," as we say: "In the good old days."

People have tried many times to exert some sort of influence on Zzzzz's sleep, in order to cause his dreams to be at least pleasant. Zzzzz, who eats his food without interrupting his sleep, has on various occasions been fed special diets made up of light and easily digested foods.

In addition to this, an effort has been made to render his sleep as voluptuous as possible. He is now made to sleep on feather mattresses, under silk drapes, in a room that is perfumed and gently ventilated by slowly-waving palms. Recently, in accordance with some of the more modern scientists' psychological theories based on sex, several girls, chosen from the most beautiful on the island, were introduced into Zzzzz's bedchamber. The idea was that dreams depend on erotic instincts, or, as they say, repressed instincts; and that, by giving free play to Zzzzz's libido, one might cause these dreams either to cease entirely or to diminish in intensity and thus no longer exert their influence on the inhabitants of the island. But Zzzzz has swallowed his food, has rolled in his feathers, has finally possessed the girls, and still the banefulness of his dreams has not changed in the least. On the contrary—especially on the occasion of the sacrifice of so many innocent girls, torn from their families by the magistrates and compelled, terror-stricken and full of loathing, to enter the bed of the monster—more than one person advanced the idea that the source of it all was nothing else but another of Zzzzz's dreams, a lewd dream whose consequences were being borne by the inhabitants of the island at the very moment in which they had the illusion of being rid of them. This, if true, would prove that on the island *everything* is but a dream of Zzzzz's; even those peaceful periods during which people say that Zzzzz is sleeping without dreams; even, as some merry-andrew has dared say, the very existence of the island, with its mountains, its cities, its fields, the sun, the moon, the stars, and every single thing. But this, as one can readily see, is sheer fantasy. It is a wild notion, that, until now, had no connection whatsoever with reality.

A more serious quality seems to be found, on the other hand, in the hypothesis of a whole school of thought, which establishes

a connection between the continuous dreaming of Zzzzz and the rather singular fact that from the moment when the monster took over the throne, all the inhabitants of the island without a single exception, have *themselves completely stopped dreaming*. It is believed that on the day when the inhabitants should eventually begin again to dream, they could, after a fashion, blunt and overcome the dreams of Zzzzz. But, in all probability, we are faced here with a false hope rather than a truly scientific theory. However, up to the present time, it has not seemed likely that this event can take place.

By the side of this school of thought there is another one, much smaller, which claims that Zzzzz might be supplanted by someone able to dream more powerfully and more efficaciously than he. What is needed, they maintain, is another Zzzzz, more powerful and with vaster dreams, who might succeed in incorporating and, as it were, absorbing in his own dreams not only the inhabitants of the island but also Zzzzz himself. Until now, however, so powerful a dreamer has not been found. And then, say many, a fine advantage it would be indeed to put in the monster's place a monster still worse, whose dreams might cause a still greater disruption!

It may not be useless to remind you that from the ranks of these intellectual theorists emerged those seven youths who, two years before our landing on the island, plotted, or rather believed they plotted, against Zzzzz. During the night these brave youths entered Zzzzz's royal palace disguised as palace guards and, weapons in hand, reached the secret chamber in which the monster sleeps. Already they could make out the enormous, obese and hairy mass sunken in the large canopy bed, all plated with gold; already, together with the brutish snore that they heard, they thought they felt the powerful breath coming from Zzzzz's nostrils; already they were unsheathing their swords, when their plot was suddenly and miserably revealed for what it was: a dream of Zzzzz's! One of the conspirators suddenly plunged his sword into the back of a fellow-plotter. Another one, weeping, fell prostrate before the bed. A third, actually dropping on his knees and

crawling on all fours, desperately embraced the royal chamber-pot. The others began dancing all around the room in a mad circle. Meanwhile, with his head buried in many pillows, Zzzzz continued to sleep, and an enigmatic expression of delicate pleasure showed on his enormously swollen and hairy face. But the people who are, as everywhere, sober-minded and simple and do not bother with theories of a more or less scientific nature and with plots more or less dreamed up by Zzzzz, accept with resignation, as we have said, the rule of the monster and all the evils that derive from it, without investigating causes or seeking remedies. To this state of submissiveness, certainly, priests contribute very much, since they have devoted themselves to the interpretation and exegesis of the dreams and nightmares of the monster. They strengthen his rule by explaining that Zzzzz's dreams are due to some sin or error committed by the nation, in the same way that the absence of dreams constitutes a reward for the good conduct of the subjects.

The only hope, therefore, that the island has left, is that time will pass and that Zzzzz will grow old; and that, as he grows older, the power of his dreams may in some way lessen. Doctors, too, are of the opinion that at a certain age Zzzzz's dreams will lose their power and will reach the consciousness of his subjects only in a weakened and deadened form. Meanwhile, waiting for the monster to reach old age, the island passes from dream to dream, from nightmare to nightmare.

[Translated by Dante Negro]

Sonnet

by Emily Mosser Tompkins

The fire that smouldered in the beams all day
Now like a well known nightmare flares and leaps:
There in its light the half-dressed housemaid weeps,
And her master has nothing, nothing to say.
And there the tenant that could never pay
Adds wretched morsels to the salvage heaps,
While the invalid, so barely rescued, sleeps,
And neighbors take the only child away.

Now things, nobody knows how much they cost,
The toys and portraits, and the heirloom clock
That kept such careless time, are finally gone.

The tall flames find strange faces on the lawn,
And the doctor turns away from legal talk
To tell reporters that no lives are lost.

About the Contributors

☆ A Dutch writer and educator, J. M. Hondius is at present science and education editor for a Dutch paper. ☆ W. R. Johnson is an editor of *Furioso*, and teaches at Carleton College. ☆ C. G. Jung is the internationally known psychologist. His works include *Psychological Types*, *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, etc. ☆ Doubleday will bring out a novel, *The Reluctant Rescue*, by Olivia Manning in the fall. An English writer, she lived in Jerusalem during the war. ☆ Vivian Mercier is an Irish writer and critic now in this country. He has contributed to *Horizon*, *The Bell*, etc., and is working on a novel. ☆ This story by Alberto Moravia, eminent Italian novelist, was written during the last years of fascism, but published only two years ago in the Roman periodical *Mercurio*. ☆ Dante Negro, formerly of the OWI, is now with the Dept. of State. ☆ Eric Sjögren, a Swedish writer and critic, is working at the University of Iowa. ☆ Poems by William Jay Smith have appeared in *Poetry*, the *New Republic*, *Furioso*, and other magazines. ☆ Joan Strong, who has appeared before in *Chimera*, is teaching at Putney School. ☆ Work by Emily Tompkins has been printed in several magazines. She is now at work on a novel.

Austin Clarke—The Poet in the Theatre

by Vivian Mercier

TWO THINGS are necessary for poetic drama—a poet and a theatre. In the past fifty years Ireland has learned that lesson twice over—first from W. B. Yeats, then from Austin Clarke. England is only beginning to learn the same lesson now, and perhaps it is one which America will never want to learn at all. If, however, any of my readers are ambitious to create an American tradition of poetic drama, I would advise them to begin from what may at first seem to be the wrong end. I would say, "Provide the theatre first, and the poet will come afterwards."

By a theatre, I don't mean the auditorium, stage, curtains, scenery, lighting equipment, wings, scene dock, and dressing rooms with hot and cold running water—though all these things are useful in their way. I mean a group of actors, designers and directors fully competent to bring to life on the stage the kind of plays that are to be written for them—in this case, poetic plays.

For a poet to write plays before he has a company of actors trained in verse-speaking is almost as futile as for a choreographer to conceive ballets before there is a trained company of dancers to perform them. Most people have now some idea of how long it takes to train dancers for the Russian Ballet, where the basic steps and the method of teaching them have been unchanged for generations. To organise a company of poetic actors who should take all the world by storm, as Diaghileff's ballet company did in the second decade of this century, would require an almost equally long period of basic training. More than that, since none of the existing theatre disciplines are entirely to the point, there

might have to be a long period of experiment before it was agreed what this basic training should be.

The only poetic tradition in the English-speaking theatre before Yeats was the Shakespearean one. Poets were condemned to write Shakespearean plays, or abandon all hope of having their plays performed. Pseudo-Shakespearean plays by many great English poets *did* win performance, but they could not survive comparison with Shakespeare for more than ten or twenty years, and soon dropped out of the repertory. Yeats, who had no desire to compete either with Shakespeare or with other less successful dramatic poets of the English tradition, saw another way out of the difficulty. He founded his own theatre, primarily to perform his own plays. He was exceptionally lucky, in that Irish economic and cultural conditions made this possible with the small amount of capital provided by his English "angel," Miss Horniman.

I have not the space here to trace step by step how prose drove poetry from the Abbey Theatre. The causes were many—economic, personal, even political, in a sense. While Yeats lived, he could still be sure of having his own new plays performed, and that seems to have been all he cared about. His encouragement of other poets was rarely more than half-hearted, and in the case of Austin Clarke he allowed personal antipathy to influence his artistic judgment. When Yeats died in 1939 there was no longer in Ireland either a poetic theatre or a dramatic poet. So, at least, it seemed at the time.

Admittedly there was Austin Clarke, an Irish poet and critic who had returned from England a year or two previously. He had by then written three plays, two of which had received their first performances in England. (*None* had been staged by the Abbey.) But Clarke's reputation in his own country was small as yet—precisely *because* he had been so slighted by Yeats, and because Irish people had had only one opportunity to see a play of his performed. They had another chance in the summer after Yeats's death—but who goes to the theatre in summer?

Since the Abbey would not do his plays, and since the two companies which played at the Gate Theatre chose their pro-

gramme from the world repertory—each only finding room for one play of his in ten years—Clarke finally decided to found his own company. He happens, unlike most poets, to possess a very beautiful speaking voice, and the ability to read poetry rhythmically and intelligibly. Starting from this point, he decided first of all to train a verse-speaking choir, which might later be enlarged into a theatre company.

The first recruits were amateurs with a taste for poetry. Some had had training in acting and/or elocution, some had not. The fewer preconceived ideas they had, the easier they were to train, in all probability. This group, the Dublin Verse Speaking Society, still gives weekly poetry recitals with Clarke on the radio and does the choral speaking so often required in poetic plays, while some of its members take important acting roles as well. When necessary, professionals with the right kind of training are induced to play, design or direct also, and this enlarged group is called the Lyric Theatre Company. The verse choir, however, still acts as the necessary permanent core of the theatre which Austin Clarke has created.[1]

Some day, perhaps, a far-sighted theatrical publisher will persuade Clarke to make a book of his theatre experiences and the practical lessons he has deduced from them. It will be an invaluable guide to other poets and directors. As I am not a man of the theatre, I think I have said all I can usefully say about Clarke's creation of a part-time theatre company to produce his own and others' work. It is time now to pass from the theatre to the poet —remembering always that his plays require performance to bring out their full quality.

If, unlike so many plays by poets, Clarke's perform better than they read, it is because of his intimate knowledge of stage technique. By the use of black drapes and modern stage lighting, he has restored to poetic drama the speed and fluidity of Shakespeare's theatre. A simple device like blacking-out the stage with-

[1] Incidentally, Clarke discovered that the best, if not the only, text-books on choral verse-speaking are American.

out dropping the curtain is God's gift to the poet. Turn the lights off and on again, and the stage has ceased to be a room—it is the inside of a man's mind. Two more turns of the switch and it is a room again. Or the action can move from place to place in full view of the audience. Spotlight one half of the stage and leave the other half in darkness. When it is time to move, black-out that side of the stage and spotlight the other half. Technically, the modern theatre has unfathomed resources, which musical comedy almost alone dares to exploit. The poet's imagination can be freer there than at any time since audiences ceased to provide stage illusion for themselves.

Clarke is by now the author of nine plays. Their names and approximate dates of composition, along with other relevant data, will be found at the end of this article. I cannot attempt to deal fully with them all in the space at my disposal here, so I must limit myself to three objectives: first, the examination of Clarke's dramatic subject-matter in general; second, an analysis of his dramatic method as represented in two characteristic plays; third, an attempt to convey—since he is first and foremost a *poet*—something of the texture and pattern of his dramatic verse.

In Ireland it is a mere commonplace of criticism to say that Clarke's subject-matter is the medieval Catholic mind. Not being a Catholic, I don't feel obliged to stress that saving word "medieval," and I think Clarke would agree with me. The organization of the Catholic Church *is* medieval—nobody would dispute that. That being so, the Catholic clergy are forced to accommodate themselves to medieval habits of thought, or live at odds with their environment all their days. As for the Irish Catholic laity, their particular kind of piety has survived almost unchanged from medieval times. The reasons for this are complex beyond my unravelling, but fortunately they do not concern us here. We can be content with the fact. For that matter, *nobody* in Ireland of any religion—or of no religion at all—can avoid some contact with the medieval institution of the Church, and its accompanying modes of thought.

Therefore when Austin Clarke writes a play, *The Flame,* about the reaction of a community of Irish nuns to a supposed miracle, and sets it in the Middle Ages, do not be misled. Another very similar play of his about a supposed miracle among a community of nuns, *Sister Eucharia,* is set in or near present-day Dublin. To point the similarity, one choral passage from the first play is repeated *verbatim* in the second.

Modern or medieval, the Catholic mind would appear at first glance to have little relevance for a twentieth-century audience which should happen to consist neither of Catholics nor—quite probably—of believers in any religion whatsoever. But, in fact, what Clarke has to say is often of supreme importance to our time. Most of his plays can be discussed in political terms, as struggles between authoritarianism and individual liberty. Shaw in *Saint Joan* used the Middle Ages as a background for one such struggle. His play raised the whole question of how to facilitate the mutation of the species, without which evolution is impossible. If society is not to stand still and finally to regress, normal people must learn to make room for the deviation from the norm—genius or saint—who is to lead the way to a higher type of society.

But while Shaw discusses this whole problem at the temperature of a debating society, Clarke feels himself personally involved in it, and his plays carry a tremendous emotional charge because of this. For the greater part of his life Clarke—like Joyce before him—has been at war with his environment. I mean by "environment" not only the Catholic Church and his Jesuit schoolmasters, but pretty well the whole of Irish society as at present constituted. Yeats, being a Protestant, could ignore Catholic public opinion in Ireland. Not so anyone brought up as a Catholic. Why this should be so, social psychology is still in too embryonic a stage to be able to explain. The dilemma, to escape which Joyce fled to Europe, has been repeated many times since in the lives of Irish authors with a Catholic upbringing—Clarke, Liam O'Flaherty, Seán O'Faoláin, Kate O'Brien, Frank O'Connor, all in their different degrees are victims. Ireland says to them, "Conform or get out," "Believe or fly"—and they would

prefer to do neither. Many American expatriates were offered a similar choice, in their view.

Over and over again, therefore, Clarke dramatises the persecution by the group of the individual who will not conform, whether it be a novice nun who refuses to have her hair cut off (*The Flame*), or a King who rebels aganist the clergy by taking a mistress (*The Plot is Ready*). But the most insidious form of persecution is that which comes from within the individual himself. A little servant girl sees the compulsions of society as bogey-men (*The Viscount of Blarney*), and vows to be chaste after her vision of the night-hag or "Fostermother" who carries the victims of infanticide to Limbo. More sophisticated people are haunted by conscience and the sense of guilt—devices which society has developed for its own protection, but which the individual himself is powerless to control.

Since society always defeats the individual in real life, Clarke can only attain his wish-fulfilment by supernatural intervention. The individual triumphs by miraculous means—and the medieval background makes such miracles acceptable, at least till the play is over. But society still wins, for its representative—usually an Abbot or a Mother Superior—can supply another interpretation of the miracle, one in which society's aims are upheld and even furthered.

Hence it is that Clarke, in his plays dealing with conventual life, cares little about the vows of poverty and chastity which his monks and nuns have made. It is the third vow, that of obedience, which matters. The insistence upon obedience to one's spiritual superiors humbles the intellect as nothing else can. As in a totalitarian state, the individualist detests not so much the power assumed over his body as that assumed over his mind.

Anybody who is at all familiar with medieval literature knows that the Middle Ages had another, freer side. Piety and restraint can be overdone, and the Church was careful to provide safety-valves. The mystery-plays were often full of a comic relief which might seem blasphemous and obscene to devout Catholics today, yet was tolerated by the medieval clergy. Jokes on sacred subjects

or at the expense of the clergy were far more common in the Middle Ages than they are now, when to so many people religion means little or nothing.

Right from his very first play, *The Son of Learning*, Clarke has delighted to exploit the comic possibilities of medieval legend and belief. His funniest play is *Black Fast*, which he calls a "poetic farce." Poetic drama has of late years taken itself far too seriously, allowing no place for Shakespearean belly-laughs. Clarke in *Black Fast* chose a broadly comic central situation. A medieval King of Ulster and his wife are at loggerheads about the date of Easter. The King, following the Irish calendar, is convinced that Lent is over and that it is lawful to eat meat again. His wife, following the Roman calendar, is still observing Lent, and not only won't eat with him, but refuses to sleep with him until the Roman Easter.

Two rival bodies of monks are appointed to argue the question, but each fails to convince the other. You might think that this would be boring, but the monks are as comically pompous as United States senators. Suddenly there is a miracle—the King's entire dinner is mysteriously whisked from the palace table. The upholders of the Roman calendar claim this as proof of their argument. They are confounded, however, when the dinner reappears in the refectory of those monks who claim that Lent is over. This seems to the latter a clear invitation to eat meat lawfully, but their opponents suggest that this "miracle" is the Devil's work. The curtain falls upon their renewed squabbling.

I am now going to examine in detail two plays, one a comedy, the other a tragedy, which show Clarke at his best and most characteristic. They are *The Son Of Learning* and *The Plot is Ready*. *The Son Of Learning* makes up in high spirits for what it lacks of theatre-craft. Clarke was only a novice when he wrote it, and he would probably, if he re-wrote the play now, give it one act instead of three, and a smaller cast. The scene is set in the Abbey of Corc, where a King has come to be cured of a demon of gluttony which has made him desert his bride at the very altar. It is

already clear that the Abbot is not making a very good job of the intended cure by prayer and fasting, when a straying scholar (or "son of learning") joins the beggars who live at the monastery.

This son of learning, like so many of his kind in the Middle Ages, is more poet-musician than scholar, and more juggler and "con-man" than either. He persuades the King to lend him his torc—the symbol of royal power—so that he may have the authority necessary to effect a cure. He then lords it over both Church and State, chasing away the monks and binding the King to a chair to watch him while he eats the royal dinner and makes love to the Queen-elect. What poet has not coveted such power at some time—as being his by right of intellect and imagination?

Finally he exorcises the demon and disappears in a clap of thunder. The audience may believe either that a demon has carried off the scholar, or that the mumbo-jumbo they have just witnessed is his finest conjuring trick of all. In any case, the King has been cured, perhaps by fright. His golden torc has disappeared along with the *jongleur,* and may either have been melted in the flames of Hell—as the monks believe—or transformed into golden coins for the scholar's pocket at the nearest goldsmith's. The son of learning deserves this much profit, for he wins no reputation by his cure. The monks convince the King that it is *their* prayers and the fasting *they* prescribed which have cured him. The play ends with preparations for the completion of the King's interrupted wedding.

The uncertainty about the "miracle" in which the poet leaves the audience at the end of *The Son Of Learning* is of course intentional, and has since become almost the hall-mark of an Austin Clarke play. At least one modern scholar, Verrall, has professed to see the same sort of ambiguity in the plays of Euripides. Aristophanes continually attacked the great tragic poet for his impiety and scepticism, but Athenian audiences as a whole took the plays of Euripides at their face value. Similarly Clarke, though himself a sceptic, can stir an audience of devout Catholics to the roots of their beings with such a tragedy as *The Plot Is Ready.*

The opening lines of this play explain its peculiar title. The

burial-plot is ready for Muriadach Mac Erca, a sixth-century Irish King, and monks are already digging his grave, for it has been revealed to their Abbot that he will die that very night. Muriadach has deserted his lawful wife Crede and taken a mistress named Osna, so for nine days his house has been surrounded by monks praying for his repentance. The King is mortally sick, stricken down by his conscience, but still battling against it. In the second scene we see Osna watching by his sick-bed and confessing that she had been sent to him at first as a decoy to lure him into an ambush of his enemies, but fell in love with him instead.

Next we see the feverish visions of Muriadach's sleep, in which the Abbot and monks come urging him to repent. He drives them away and calls instead for Osna. He then awakes, but delirium is still upon him, and he rushes out to attack his enemies, the monks. Before he can reach them, he falls headlong into his own grave and breaks his neck. The Abbot and Crede are with him in his last moments, and say he died repentant. But Muriadach's ghost comes to the door of his house and calls for Osna. She goes out into the dazzling light of his transfigured presence and disappears. The Abbot gives *his* explanation—Osna has been carried off to Hell by a fallen angel—but he is obviously making it up as he goes along, and it sounds far from convincing.

From the first word almost to the last, this play rushes towards an inevitable end—the death of Muriadach. It has been my misfortune to witness a number of verse-plays which—under the mistaken impression that they are imitating Greek tragedy—stumble and stutter to an end which is equally inevitable. But when *The Plot Is Ready* has reached its seeming climax, Clarke springs his real climax upon an unprepared audience. All the action from Muriadach's awakening to the end of the play is conveyed in less than a hundred lines of staccato verse. The rapid succession of *coups de théâtre* is overwhelming in its effect.

To attain his varied ends Clarke employs a variety of poetic means. The animals in *As The Crow Flies* speak in various lyric

metres; *The Kiss* and *The Second Kiss* are entirely in rhymed couplets; *The Viscount of Blarney* is written in half-doggerel octosyllabics to accent its folk-lore *naïveté*. Clarke's basic metre in most of his plays, however, is blank verse—less supple, more liturgical, than Shakespeare's. It must be spoken slowly and with care, but in any case there are few long speeches to tempt the actor to gabble. If speed is essential to the action, the poet either adopts a swifter metre, or divides one line among three or four speakers.

Clarke's blank verse has quite a wide range, none the less. At one end of the scale we have the simplicity and directness of the exchanges between Sister Eucharia and the souls in Purgatory. In order not to interrupt the run of the verse, I shall not attribute any of the speeches to a particular speaker:

> Let the dead speak.
> Sisters of this convent,
> twenty
> thirty
> A hundred years ago.
> Were you afraid?
> We were afraid.
> And did you fail?
> We failed.
> Are you in pain?
> We are in pain.
> O they
> Are joyful in their pain.
> Yes, we
> Are joyful in the pain of Purgatory.
> And feel in every pain the striking love
> Of God.
> I was so timid in my life
> I did not hear the little cough that killed me.
> But I am brave now, I am brave.
> I was
> So happy, so contented that I never knew a pain
> In all my time on earth.
> My hands
> Are memory, but they are burning holes
> Shaped by the nails—
> That pierce my hands—
> That break
> My feet.
> Ah! I am wounded in the side.

I share the blood and water.
I am saved
By incorruption of that holy matter.
My soul is purified by flame.
I am
Halfway to Heaven in my pain.

At the other end of the scale are passages where the imagery is too thickly clotted, or the thought too involved, for the mind to follow them at first hearing. In such passages the poet's dramatic purpose is defeated unless the general trend of the passage, at least, reaches the audience. Take Crede's speech in *The Plot Is Ready*, when she pleads with the Abbot to end his praying blockade of Muriadach's house. The thought moves too quickly for the hearer, though not for the reader:

Had there been nothing
In marriage but obedience, how could I
Have broken the ninth commandment, coveted
My husband? What if the knowledge we gain in blush
And downward look corrupt us, unawares,
And jealousy become our hidden lover?
Believe me I have suffered in the darkness
All, all that torment of the naked pupil,
For demons held the lashes back and I saw
In smiling act, the last indulgence
By which the soul is lost. Why must I blame
Muriadach, if my own shame at midnight
Has sent me here before it is too late?

As a rule, however, in spite of such occasional digressions into scholasticism, Clarke's verse in his plays manages to be both good drama and good poetry. Take the lines from the same play which describe Muriadach's spirit rising from the dead. (The device of having narrators is used only for this brief episode).

NARRATORS: A shadowy form
Is waiting by the grave.
It turns
Impatiently.
It glimmers to the ground
Shaping itself from memory—
begins
To move more rapidly across the grass.
BOTH NARRATORS: The spirit of Muriadach Mac Erca
Is coming to this house.
ABBOT: Pray, pray for him!

BOTH NARRATORS: We cannot see his face, so glorious
The heart is shaken with tears.
VOICE OF
MURIADACH (*outside*): Osna!

I cannot think of any living poet who could achieve such a dramatic effect with so few words. When the words are reinforced by a mutter of prayer from the monks and a darkening of the lights on-stage to stress the glow that comes from Muriadach's figure outside, I defy anyone's scalp not to prickle. Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" has been achieved. Such moments of supreme theatricality are possible only where the poet and his imagination have been restored to their rightful place in the theatre.

LIST OF PLAYS, WITH APPROXIMATE DATES OF COMPOSITION

Plays marked with an asterisk have been performed by either the Dublin Verse Speaking Society, or the Lyric Theatre Company, or both. These two groups have also performed plays by W. B. Yeats, Gordon Bottomley, Archibald MacLeish, T. Sturge Moore, Mary Devenport O'Neill, and George Fitzmaurice.

**The Son of Learning*, a Poetic Comedy in three acts (1926).
**The Flame*, a Play in one act (1929).
Sister Eucharia, a Play in three scenes (1938).
Black Fast, a Poetic Farce in one act (1941).
**As The Crow Flies*, a Lyric Play for the Air (1942). Broadcast several times from Radio Eireann.
**The Kiss*, a Light Comedy in one act, freely adapted from the French of Théodore de Banville (1942).
**The Plot Is Ready*, a Play in four scenes (1943).
**The Viscount of Blarney*, a Play for Radio or Stage in one act (1944).
**The Second Kiss*, a Light Comedy in one act (1946).

Neither of Clarke's two groups has performed any of these plays for longer than a week at a time and often the commitments of their professional actors have confined them to week-end performances. Only the first two plays have been published otherwise than in *The Dublin Magazine* and/or small limited editions. They are to be found in Clarke's *Collected Poems*. The case for a volume of *Collected Plays* hardly needs to be put.

Holy Fire

by Olivia Manning

WITHIN the walls of the old city of Jerusalem the streets are like tunnels. Those who live outside speak slightingly of the smells within. It is true that near the Jaffa Gate, where the meat hangs in the sun beneath a veil of flies, the stench arrests you like a barricade, but beyond the air is often scented by spices or Arab sweetmeats, or the incense-burning shops round the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

It was the Greek Easter of 1943—the year the British police took it into their heads to organise the Holy Fire. That year no one would have a chance to get killed. There would be no camping and picnicking all night in the basilica. The door would be locked and admission, at an hour to be kept secret, would be by ticket. Bunches of tickets were distributed to the different communities—the Greeks, the Roman Catholics, the Russians, the Armenians, the Copts and the lowly Abyssinians who were so poor they were permitted to hold their services only on the church roof.

All were angered by this organization; the Greeks especially so. They regarded the ceremony as their own. Elie Papadimitriou provided tickets but refused to attend herself. The miserable, bureaucratic English, she said, were trying to turn a great pagan spectacle into a Protestant church service. Under her influence Katy Antonius, widow of the Arab leader, refused her tickets not too willingly and explained to us: "If people want to get killed, no one has any right to stop them." It looked as though we had got a bad year for the ceremony.

In the cool early morning sunlight we set off down the main sûk. We turned a corner and were halted by a barrier. Beyond it the church sûk looked unfamiliar in its emptiness. We brought out our tickets. Could we go through? No. This was the exit. We must return to the Jaffa Gate and try again to find the entrance. No Greek could have been crosser than we were as we retraced our steps. We found we were being followed by a religious procession, and stepping into a doorway saw coming towards us a plump, pale church dignitary in robes of cyclamen pink. Archie Lyall wondered should he salute or take off his cap? He decided to take off his cap and the dignitary, smiling approvingly, greeted him in straight American. Archie was delighted. That, he told us, must be Archbishop Spellman. In a better humour we found the right turning and came on the fringe of a crowd. Not a bad crowd, loose in structure; if we could look important enough, we might work our way through. We passed a friend who shouted: "Any last messages?" but we could see no cause for fear. The crowd thinned out and we went on alone.

In the sûk from which the church alley led off, our troubles seemed to be over before begun. This was the Greek quarter. Here massive black coffin lids were propped against undertaker shops and the cafés were said to sell genuine oozo. Notable Greek café proprietors stood in their doorways gazing anxiously down the road; we, gazing with them, realised that what we could see in the distance was the back of a formidable crowd. We came up to it. It was closely jammed and growling. We consulted those on the edge. Could we, holding special tickets, get through? Not a sheet of tissue paper could get through even edgeways. Those in front had been there before dawn, indeed some overnight. And what was holding everyone up? A barrier across the road. To a people of no great patience, unused to queues and not accepting lightly the idiocies of authority, the barrier, during the passing hours, had become an insult. For what was everyone being kept waiting? The Armenian patriarch to come and open the church door with a key. Why the Armenian patriarch? No one was calm enough to explain. We could only suppose that the door of the

church and, therefore, the key to the door, belonged to the Armenians; if so, of course, no other community would be permitted to touch them.

Indignation was growing into anger; anger here led quickly to action. But we decided to wait. We supposed if trouble started we could retreat to a café. We had scarcely been there five minutes when the road behind us was blocked by newcomers; within ten minutes it was necessary to make a public appeal for room to bring up one's arm to blow one's nose.

When after an hour the patriarch had not arrived, Greek soldiers in the crowd began to shout, first one here and there, then all together. A Greek officer mounted the barrier and on behalf of the British police, began an appeal. The soldiers bawled him down. They were in no mood to listen to officers, a number of whom, suspect reactionaries, had come to grief in the recent revolt in Egypt. Soldiers at the back now began to elbow fiercely forward through the solid crowd. It was a painful process for others. People hit in the eye or trampled on would scream with a peculiar intensity. All around was a chattering of panic—then came a pause.

Taller than the Latins, we could see over their heads the leisurely approach of the Armenian patriarch in his billowing black silks. A cannon-burst of hisses caused him to skip into the alleyway and out of sight.

The crowd expected to follow at once, but the moment decided upon by authority had not yet come. A police officer stood with a watch in his hand. The minutes passed. The crowd became silent; slowly there began to pass through it, like a throb, the determination to break down the barrier; the throb grew into a battering ram swaying the willing and the unwilling together. One could hear people breathing. The police, realising what was happening, ran shouting into the middle of the road. They dodged back to the walls as the barrier crashed down. We all toppled forward. Archie, for some reason, kept shouting: "Bear to the right," but I could think only of the need to keep on my feet. People pelted against one another like boulders bounding down a hillside. Some-

one very heavy flung me through a curtain of painted candles that hung by their wicks before a religious curio shop. Smashing glass and wood, bringing down rosaries, crucifixes, olive-wood camels and baskets of Jericho roses, I landed with some wooden forms and a Polish officer on top of me. I was pulled out with my sunglasses intact in my hand.

As the pace slackened, the police got the barrier up again and took up a threatening attitude before the few shut out. We were given permission to proceed.

In the church courtyard, where a paling prevented entrance through the other gate, the crowd had been checked again by a barrier across the church door. The assault had already begun and soldiers following behind us flung themselves exultantly against the backs of their compatriots. Others were climbing over the fence, kicking faces with heavy boots, while some had climbed over by the scaffolding supporting the age- and earthquake-riven façade, and were dropping like stones upon the innocents below. At last the second barrier was down and we fell into the church.

All the candles had been put out. In the darkness and chill air, bewildered by peace, we stood shaken while others disappeared around us. A master of ceremonies touched our arms tenderly and led us to the daylight of the main basilica. There he placed us in seats immediately opposite the entrance to the sepulchre. We knew we had no right to so prominent a position. We sat nervously, waiting to move back at the first sight of the High Commissioner, but no one of importance came. Later we learnt that the usual collection of British officials who felt it a duty to attend these ceremonies had retreated before the awful chaos caused by the police. We alone represented the empire. For half an hour or so the seats around us remained empty, then they were diffidently taken by British officers, nurses and anyone who, looking like a sightseer rather than a worshipper, could get through the cordon. Many breached the cordon but not all were permitted to remain inside. It was not easy to decide what governed privilege. Guessing who would or would not be turned out became our major interest. A Coptic family—father a typical Europeanised Egyptian

wearing a fez, three identical daughters with varnished, smiling lips, sticky eyelashes, bright silk dresses, hands filled with coloured candles—was permitted to remain. A fat, elderly Greek in tight, dusty black, stiff shirt and black bow tie, puffing and sweating, was assisted by some minor police to lower himself into a chair. Instantly a major-domo—a peevish man wearing pince-nez—rushed to him with an outraged air and ordered him back behind the cordon. The old Greek pleaded, said he had been standing for hours, said how relieved he had been to sit for a moment, said he would not stay long—it was no good. He was levered out of the chair and a limp Moslem policeman, hat over eyes, hands hanging, took his place and slept through the ceremony. All sorts of semi-ecclesiastical personages, on the strength of shabby black robes, got through the cordon to be immediately ordered back. We concluded that anyone likely to regard the miracle as genuine was expected to find strength to stand through it.

Behind the cordon the crowd was growing denser. The great domed rotunda built by the Crusaders was shored up by scaffolding and iron girders. The worshippers at the back began climbing the struts; as they rose higher and higher, a weight of humanity overhung the floor. People admitted to the upper gallery gazed tiny from the rail; those on the roof hung down through the dome windows over what must have seemed to them coloured pin-heads massed round an elaborate central box of gold and coloured marbles. The air was filled with a hubbub of voices singing, shouting and gossiping to pass the time. Occasional processions organised themselves and struggled round to relieve the tedium. A handful of Greek boys with a home-made banner pushed through the crowd shouting: "Long live King George"; a rival faction shouted back—but there was little reaction from the public. This was not the time or place for politics. The representatives of the leading Christian Arab families now made their traditional circuit of the church with ancient banners scarcely decipherable, that looked like printed oil-cloth. Very proud, very self-conscious, they were a fine collection of ruffianly figures; some in suits lacking collars and ties; some recognisably local

garage hands in oily galabiahs, but with that Arab unawareness of social differences, the poorest might link fingers with some prosperous relative in a suit of English stuff and pointed patent shoes.

Some members of the Greek royal family arrived—Prince Paul first, tall, pale, fattish, with a monocle and a European air; then Peter, much more the prince to appeal to the English, looking like them and exuding good-natured interest; then the princess, said to be the brains of the family, fashionable, on edge and chattering. They stood at the doorway of the sepulchre. The Greeks accepted their presence with indifference.

At last, at last, when everyone was exhausted with waiting, the doorway was cleared for the main procession. We had been watching a single patch of sunlight making its way towards the sepulchre, but when the time came we forgot to note if its position were significant.

In came the old, bearded patriarch in magnificent robes of white brocaded satin, all the church jewellery round his neck and a vast onion dome of ornamented gold upon his head. The crowd danced up and down, frantic with excitement. After him came the senior priests in golden robes, some brassy new, some falling to pieces with age. Then the choir, the usual boys in worn black satin, singing well enough when they could be heard through the din. Then a mixed crowd, apparently anyone who could get hold of a banner, shabby old souls in tattered robes and others who looked like slick young men in on the religion business. The crowd broke the cordon with a maniac uproar. The procession, headed by majordomos thumping the floor with silver-headed sticks, fought its way three times round the sepulchre. There was respect and a certain amount of protection for the patriarch, who looked like one of the senior apostles and, glancing with intelligent eyes from side to side, put his jewellery straight whenever he noticed a camera; the golden priests were secure enough behind him; but the rag, tag and bobtail of the procession were tossed as in the wake of a liner. Banners, robes and tempers were disappearing in the second round; in the third, most had been lost in the crowd.

The patriarch now mounted the marble platform before the tomb and there his crown and outer robes were removed. In his simple black canonicals, he was patted down respectfully by a priest in a ritual search for hidden means of making fire. Nothing, of course, was found. Then the door to the tomb that had been sealed, was unsealed. The patriarch and two priests entered; the door was shut upon them. A great silence came down on the church. Everyone was watching the smoke-blackened holes on either side of the sepulchre through which the fire would appear. We wondered how long we would have to wait. "A decent interval," Archie suggested—but it was scarcely that. A few moments after the shutting of the door a vibrating, exhilarating cry of triumph rose through the basilica; an exulting vitality swept over the crowd. A thunder of church bells, here felt rather than heard, shaking down plaster from the walls, announced to the outer world that the miracle of Pentecost had again been accomplished. Men, balanced on the ledge of the sepulchre, snatched the metal cylinders containing the fire and started to fight a way through the crowd. People surged upon them to light candles, those nearest passing the light to those behind until all over the church, up the scaffolding, on the topmost balcony, on the roof, the flame was dividing and multiplying. Beards and hair were set on fire; veils flared up to be hastily beaten out. The monstrous painted candles by the sepulchre were lighted and all through the dark, outlying parts of the church, the many chapels, the place of crucifixion—only a few yards from the tomb—the twilit crypt where St. Helena discovered the true cross, candles were tipped with the fire from heaven. In the old days a runner had each year waited to fly with the fire to Jaffa where a ship would receive it and carry it with all speed to the Russian Imperial Court. In Jerusalem it was being rumoured that the time would soon come when a Soviet ship would wait to carry the fire to the newly devout in a new Moscow.

But what had happened to the patriarch, the vehicle of God, whose personal triumph the miracle was? Suddenly the door of the sepulchre burst open and the old man, aglow with excite-

ment, beard and hair flying, rushed out, carrying bunches of lighted candles in his hands. He was seized by a group of priests who led him at a run through the church and away. We did not see him again.

As the boys hanging to the scaffolding by hand and foot leant out with their lights over the crowd, the walls seemed to sway inwards. The police shouted up at them to put the candles out; they climbed higher in derision; their mothers, massive in black veiling, hands full of bouquets of flame, smiled unmoved from the lower struts. Occasionally someone fell to the ground with a long howl of fear.

We, caught up in it all, stood on our chairs and shouted with the rest. Around came another procession, Coptic or Abyssinian, glittering and grimy. Priests carried on poles large silver plates decorated with cherubim and hung with silver bells which they shook continuously. Boys, perched on the shoulders of men, lashed at the crowd with whips. Now a peculiar fury of excitement possessed the worshippers and, breaking the cordon, they trampled in upon the sacred seats of the unbelievers and invaded the steps of the sepulchre itself. At this point the Greek royal party hurriedly left and we saw the wisdom of following.

Outside all those who had been unable to get into the church were sitting peacefully on the walls in the noonday sunlight. They had heard the bells and the fire had been brought out to them. They were content. A number of casualties lay in a corner of the courtyard. We stopped at the broken-up curio shop and offered to pay for the damage, but the owner said the police could do that. They had, he said, brought trouble on themselves. His price would not be low.

Vision and Revision

For Howard Nemerov

by W. R. Johnson

The faces in the street are no faces,
They are the treachery of old reports.
When the long bell peals and the horde rises
Darkling to populate the last resorts,
The faces in the street are no faces.

With capering heroes from three thousand years
Dead fog of this city is come alive.
Hail the generations which revive
To sport their broken eyes. Here are your sires,
Dead fog of the city come alive.

Between the smokes of Troy and London
Three million faces are screened together,
Ancestral ghosts, they mingle and deploy.
Observe now, how all bearded portraits gather
Between the smokes of London and of Troy.

Of the night-fog dissembled only shrifts
Inhabit a city of blown houses.
See, when it flashed and the bricks rumbled,
The faces in the street were no faces,
Only shrifts of the night-fog dissembled.

Terence Died

by Joan Strong

It was three months now since Terence Jordan died, and still Ellen woke up in the night remembering how she had stood by the bedside on that particular morning. Over and over again she saw her father's rugged head like an oak carving laid carefully on the pillow with his long steel-gray hair brushed neatly back at last. Death was no surprise for she had seen its enormous vulture wings descending slowly on him for weeks. And the very night before, she noticed how he turned his face away and fixed his eyes on a distant answer to some constant weary question. Then the glow of his eyes, which had dominated the carefully shaded room only a moment before, was suddenly gone. Ellen had said goodnight then as usual and withdrew knowing that tomorrow he would be dead.

In the morning she was called back to the room which was full of restrained family weeping. But she stood dry-eyed next to the bed and thought clearly: "You are not my father. He is dead and gone, and I am set free at last."

Ellen's father had been like a great tree under whose sombre magnificent shadow she had always lived, even though she resented it and yearned for a lighter world. But she was enthralled by that very protecting shade where she could dream safely of bright things outside, and she was ashamed of her enthrallment. Now her father was dead and the living roots of all she had known were torn out.

Ellen observed her mother who kept busy with household work, besides funeral arrangements and countless details of settling her husband's affairs. Ellen's aunt came in to help, and the two women

moved like companion shadows accepting a common sorrow. Ellen's handsome blond brother, young Terry, thrashed against grief. Angry tears would often burst on him till he flung out of the room and ran out of doors like a wild animal. But Ellen moved through a paralyzed trance, her body and mind weighed down with the chaos of uprooted life, and a greed for freedom devoured her heart.

The small serene funeral was held on a bright windy day. A glorious sun brought every trace of color out of the dark clothes of the mourners. It made clear white discs of their sad faces and flew mockingly about the windblown trees in the cemetery until leaf shadows were dancing crazily over the tombstones. Ellen felt restless and huge in her black dress. Voices screamed in her ears for escape from this dutiful ceremony. On the way home she kept silent, but the pall and the torment lasted for weeks.

Then after three months Gilliad's Carnival came to town. Ellen saw it from her window at midnight, spread out like a blazing sunflower in the public ball field. The ferris wheels and roller coasters sprinkled seeds of light which shot far and wide in long rays over the field as the little cars sailed into the air and down again. Jangling music and the shouting of barkers floated wide around in the still summer darkness, and people swarmed in the enclosure as if stirred by a violent spoon. Ellen watched it all with desperate hunger. She wanted to throw herself in and be tossed in the whirl and the noise until her paralyzed soul was jarred into some kind of freedom. For then it might start up again like the wheels of a shaken-up watch.

She put on a red dress and brushed her hair out in a wide black fan over her shoulders. She stood at the mirror and painted her face boldly for a masquerade like the women she'd seen passing in quiet night streets with a challenging flare in their eyes. For a moment she looked at her angular shape, her features made coarse and brilliant over wide cheekbones, and her fierce mouth that she hated for its natural ugliness. But her blood tingled. She ran quietly out of the house and across the field, carried lightly by madness and frantic joy.

The gates were flung wide like a pair of feasting jaws. She was caught up at once in the streaming crowd and swept along before the myriad booths of the midway. A man leaned from a rickety tower and shouted hoarse magic through a cardboard trumpet into the jostling jumble of faces.

"Lay-dees an' gentlemun! This way for the shooting gallery, the ghost house, the penny arcade! This way for the sky ride, the jungle, the whip, the finest an' fanciest show of yer lives!" His face loomed shiny with veins standing out under his greasy cap. Caught in his own rhythm, he swayed with his eyes closed and yelled to the sky: "Gilliad's gives you the greatest of all shows! Nothin' but thrills an' excitement, chills an' fever, one pack of ad-venture!" In a flash he stooped to the railing and fixed a wandering passerby with his beady eyes. "Don't miss the wonder caves, mister, this way!" Then he shouted it abroad again: "This way to the wonder caves, most sensational sights in the world!"

The crowd was guided by his shouts like a monstrous amoeba flowing this way and that, blindly engulfing the dazzle of sights, the parade of cheap pastimes lined up in flimsy boxes.

Ellen stopped at the shooting gallery where brown paper ducks revolved on a huge wooden frame. Tawdry prizes lay heaped behind the counter, glass dishes, painted china figures of clowns and toe dancers, glossy cameras which could never work, and mounds of pink and green compacts.

"Three shots for a dime, take a chance for a dime, folks!" A clod of a woman with frizzled henna hair and a scarlet patch on each pasty cheek was scooping in dimes and calling stridently for more. Shots peppered the target as the little tin guns passed from hand to hand to be held between other grubby cheeks and shoulders. A gigantic man in a mud-colored corduroy suit pushed the mob aside, paid a dollar and shot up the target. He threw back his head and laughed raucously. "It's a cinch, you guys!" he bellowed into the crowd, and tossing the gun at the red-haired woman he stuffed his great pockets with his loot and ambled away.

"Gawd blast ya!" muttered the woman and tacked up a fresh handful of ducks.

"Cheer up, Sadie, he's the first winner tonight," a gaunt man said, who leaned familiarly on the counter and watched with a sardonic leer on his stubbly face while bragging customers kept failing to hit the target.

Ellen picked up a gun and shot viciously, wide of the mark, but the crackling shots made her laugh.

"Not so good!" she grinned to the gaunt man at her elbow. His eyes fastened on hers.

"Better luck next time. Come around again," he murmured, and she felt his creeping gaze sear her back as she walked on.

She dodged away out of his sight and found a quiet booth surrounded by children, all wan-faced as sprites in a nightmare. They were tossing rings, trying to catch prizes from a cluttered table.

"Lemme try!" whined a pale little boy to his brother who held all the rings in bracelets up his arm.

"Aw, yer no good, Andy!" jeered the brother, handing him one ring at a time. Andy pitched the rings till they lay everywhere like clumsy toppling barrel hoops, but he missed all the prizes and ran away bawling hysterically. Ellen took up some rings but dropped them at once, for she saw the gaunt man strolling toward her.

She went on at a trot past the penny arcade, the whip and the jungle. A boy selling pop bumped into her waving an orange bottle in her face, but she pushed on. Some one tweeked her hair. Thick-coated arms and bare arms brushed her shoulders and she winced at their touch. A knot of women stood in the way, all a-jabber and spilling popcorn about them. She pressed through as if wading in a bog of dense acrid weeds.

The arched door of the ghost house faced her, roughly painted to look like the front of a medieval castle. Gay shrieks and laughter came from the cool interior. She glanced round but the gaunt man must have fallen behind, so she paid her dime casually and disappeared into the ghost house.

They put her in a cart on thin tracks and gave her a push down a rumbling tunnel. Skeletons reared out of the walls, lights flashed on mechanical dummies strapped down and struggling in

the path. Paws reached out and just missed her, and she screamed with delighted fear as cobwebs and wet objects touched her bare skin in the dark. In five quick minutes she swept into the open among gleeful faces which laughed harshly at her dishevelled surprise.

Nearby was the storm boat, a swing which rocked up in bigger and bigger sickening curves till it swung clear over in vertical loops. Still panting from the ghost house, Ellen looked back for the gaunt man who was nowhere in sight. So she tugged her dress straight and joined the people mounting the storm boat.

The soar and the plunge sent the whole carnival streaming down her eyes and up again in a giddy rainbow. The downsweep hollowed her suddenly to a mere shell, and the upsweep bore down like a ton poured into her. When the boat strained up to the top of its loop, she fainted for a black hesitant second and woke up dizzily with the wind speeding past her again.

Safe on the ground, she staggered away from the storm boat and leaned against a wall till her head stopped whirling and the carnival settled down to a normal blinking of lights and colors. But there was the gaunt man threading his easy way toward her, and the horrid whirl of flight took hold of her again. As she ran his face kept emerging impossibly from the gaudy sea of faces, down from the chains of lights, and up from the raw trampled ground. It emerged from the speckled dark when she closed her eyes for relief, and she fled recklessly, not knowing where.

She found herself in a lofty white building with a bare counter. A chef's cap nodded toward her and she ordered an iced drink, for she was suddenly throbbing with the heat.

Here she felt out of the carnival and sat for a peaceful moment on the high stool, sipping thankfully at her cold sugary lemonade. A drab woman sat near her with a husband who matched her in drabness. She eyed Ellen up and down as though she were rubbish and turned away, whispering into his ear. Then they both looked, stared Ellen to ashes, and recoiled to seats farther away. Ellen twisted about in shame. Her dress seemed too short, too bare at the neck. And such a smeared rumpled creature stared back at her

from the great mirror opposite! She turned away in horror and ran outside, leaving her lemonade unfinished.

Once back in the mob she was drunk again with the mixture of excitement and fear. She enjoyed it and hated it too, like the sting of hot water on hands numb with frost. She thought no more of the drab couple behind her and looked daringly for the gaunt man. If he were there she would run, but if not she would wander carelessly, perhaps watch him while he didn't see her. She set out toward the roller coaster, walking as lightly as one in a dream.

In the speeding car she could lose herself over again in mock danger, letting her senses be torn by the diving, then assemble gradually on the slow upward climb, to be torn yet more wildly in the next dive. Her hair streamed back when her neck was pulled rudely by each mad fall. She was wound like a spring and then flung to pieces, and she clung to the railing with delicious terror.

But when it was over and they herded her out with the rest, the carnival looked stale and tired like the last fireworks stringing out the Fourth of July. The merry-go-round came to a standstill, leaving its tune and its horses suspended in mid-air. The people were thinning out. The chief barker had come down on the grass and leaned damply against his tower, mopping his head and gulping one orange pop after another while the pop boy sat by and handed them out to him. The booths were darkening one by one, but the wonder caves kept up a final flickering splendor and the hungriest thrill-seekers swarmed in and out, like bees around a vast honey-comb. Ellen made for it, eager to prolong the frenzy till she was exhausted beyond feeling and the load of death in her might be used up.

"Last call for the wonder caves, one more chance, folks, to see the best of the show!" The voice called them in wearily. Already the man in charge was turning out the blue and yellow lights on the gaudy façade, leaving only a uniform red glow. Ellen paid and got in just as he fastened a chain over the entrance.

"Sorry, that's all we can take. Closing time." The disappointed late-comers shrugged and idled away in the night.

The first caves were flatly painted caverns with cardboard gorillas and crocodiles, and fake jungle plants crowded into them. Then came a trembling volcano alternately spouting red paper streamers and smoke, and churning out heavy black oil for lava at thirty-second intervals. Then came a series of blue ice caves full of stalactites and air piped through in cold draughts. Junked in among these was a desert with pyramids, then hanging gardens of dusty plants on terraces hung from the roof and a mustard-colored palace in the background. Then came the Taj Mahal erected in plaster with an oblong mirror before it, bordered with midget poplars. The last few people straggled along a boardwalk and stared from side to side like cattle browsing in the dusk.

"What a cheap lot of stuff!" echoed a voice. "Let's get our dimes back, Jimmy."

"Yeah, let's." The voices wound off down a side passage.

A thudding of feet resounded and a boy ran past Ellen, rocking the boardwalk, scooting in and out of the pale lights till he disappeared in the tunnel ahead.

"Hey, wait for me!" his voice cried, and he was gone.

Ellen thought she was near the exit when she heard sneakered feet padding slowly behind her. With a rush of fear she quickened her step, and the other feet quickened to measured strides. She bolted, her lungs swollen with terror, and the feet started loping intently, faster and faster until the caves shook. The weak lights swung madly and a few of them winked out. She kept looking for a door, a side passage, any way out of the long closed walls. But here was the volcano again and the ice caves. She must have gone past the exit. A stiffening chill swept all over her and her legs wouldn't run any more, though they jerked on like mechanical toys. She saw a shadow slant headlong up the wall beside her with a rasping breath and felt a hand grip her shoulder, jerking her around. Ellen screamed in the face of the gaunt man which veered like a wax head close to her eyes. She clawed and kicked madly, but her fear dashed on, dissolving and screaming to every corner of the caves. The storm boat swept down at her and spun her away in a long black arc.

"Hold 'er 'ead up, Bill, she's comin' to." The dull yellow blot of a lantern swam into her eyes with two faces dangling beside it. She recognized one as the man in charge of the wonder caves. Many feet shuffled around with a murmur close by and the air was clear and intense with thousands of crickets. They had laid her on the edge of the ball field outside the carnival grounds and the last of the mob hung around like vagrants to pick up a few more shreds of excitement. Bill, the wonder cave man, gave a bored sigh and shifted his arm under her head. The other face sailed up with the lantern and alighted on top of a policeman's uniform. He frowned over a small pad held in his palm.

"What's yer name and address, lady? And tell us just what happened. That's the routine."

She told them and described the gaunt man, recalling every detail of his face as it had appeared from the time he stood at the shooting gallery till he had followed her through the carnival and overtaken her in the caves with that waxen look. By the time she had finished, the policeman had been gaping for several minutes without writing anything, and now he shut his pad with a clap and stuffed it in his pocket. He exchanged a weary glance with Bill.

"Listen kid," he said, pointing at her. "Yer crazy. You were the last person out of the caves. I know because we kept an eye on the doors like we have to at closing time. That's the routine an' I was paid good money to see it done. That guy you described is Sandy, Bill's brother here. He's in charge of the midway, an' the three of us was standin' outside the caves when we heard you holler. He came in with us to see what was up. He was right here till five minutes ago when he went off to hunt up a doc. We thought you was in a coma or a suicide maybe. Huh! What's yer game anyhow? Wish we'd told him he could go home to bed, for cryin' out loud. Come on. We'll see you get home safe through all them crickets out there."

They got her to her feet. Bill eyed the policeman, shrugged and disappeared with a shambling gait to the carnival grounds. The bystanders faded off in disappointed scornful groups.

The policeman took her across the field and whistled absently all the way, with one hand in his pocket and the other idly swinging his club. She couldn't bring herself to apologize till they got to her door. Then she said lamely: "I'm sorry I caused you so much trouble. I guess I was upset and confused." She thought of her father dead in his room, dead in the cemetery, and somehow she remembered him with his eyes open and piercing, like eagle-eyes.

"Awright," said the policeman indifferently. A puzzled look spread over his large face and he shook his head blankly. "It beats me, though. We get real trouble with these travelin' carnivals sometimes. That's the routine. But we never had no make-believe stuff like this. Sounds like you was askin' fer trouble and missed out." He scratched his head. "Had a lady like that call me down clear to Elm Corner one night, me an' Sam an' Joe. What did we find when we got there?" He spread out his hands. "Nothin'. She made it up fer fun. Said so afterwards. But yer only a kid too, it beats me. Better stay home an' be good." He strolled away whistling.

Ellen crept upstairs wondering if it would all seem laughable in the morning. Right now she only felt weary and crushed as though she had danced recklessly all night in a cheap disguise and discovered at last that everyone recognized her after all and pitied her efforts. Her complete numbness had not given place to miraculous energy either. The carnival had turned out to be a crazy treadmill instead of a magic Cinderella ball. She felt like a worm which had tried to devour the world and now found itself minute and crawling on vast flat earth.

She went to her room as ashamed as if she had been caught in the act of stealing. The dawn was already breaking like veils dissolving gradually upward from the trees outside the window. Soon the everyday life in the house would start again, and Ellen knew she would belong to it patiently now because her struggle was empty and turning absurd. She fell asleep soundly, for Terence her father seemed to be wide awake in the next room as usual, keeping watch with remote and vigilant eyes.

II. Contemporary Literature: Sweden

by Eric Sjögren

It is an ironic fact that even spiritual leadership is denied the smaller nations. We do, indeed, find individual writers of international renown in Holland, Switzerland or Sweden, but only in exceptional and isolated instances have literary movements originated in any of the small countries. The partial explanation is obvious—the slight carrying power of the respective languages—and it would suffice were it not that the situation is the same in the other arts, whose media are international. As it is, we can only accept the fact that literary development in a small country is largely dependent on the larger cultures, and instead stress the instances when deviations, intensifications or innovations have been added to the outside influences.

The national romanticism of the 1890's naturally favored such tendencies, both in its regionalism and in its interest in history. The lyrical beauty of the landscape of the poet's own district was discovered, dialects were explored for their adaptability to poetry, and if the present were ignoble there was always a glorious past to turn to, such as—in the countries chosen at random above—the ages of William of Orange, Wilhelm Tell or Charles XII. The 1890's did, indeed, see an almost unprecedented flowering of Swedish poetry, but the fact that the poetic medium was chosen in preference to prose again stresses the limitation to the national sphere. The one writer of the era who wrote prose consistently, Selma Lagerlöf, did attain international fame, even though her

Note: This is the second of a series of articles on the contemporary literature and culture of various European countries.

reputation abroad and at home has dwindled considerably in recent years. Characteristically, one of the first Nobel prizes was awarded Frédéric Mistral, the Provençal poet.

Swedish prose did not really come into its own until the latter part of the nineteenth century and it was rapidly brought to perfection by Strindberg, whose stylistic genius has had perhaps more lasting influence than any other aspect of his enormously versatile mind. From then on it is possible to limit the discussion of Swedish writing to prose, an unfortunate limitation, but necessary in an article intended for readers with no knowledge of the Swedish language. With prose writers there is always the hope that translations will some day appear, but poetry remains—with extremely rare exceptions—forever in the language it was written.

The years before the first world war seem now almost like a mythological past of peace and harmony, a time of security and leisurely meditation. The sad and self-centered young man, a skeptic if not a cynic, the hero of a great number of novels and short stories, may now, when the problems are so much harsher, seem slightly unreal. But we should not forget that even though this attitude is partly literary, and inherited particularly from Baudelaire and from Walter Pater and the English decadents, the ferments leading to the emotional unrest and upheavals which have characterized the history as well as the arts of the past thirty years are to be found in just this period. Vagueness is unavoidable, for the problems are not yet clearly defined, but the writing of the period does not quite deserve the half contemptuous name that has been given it: it is not merely a "littérature des flaneurs." Its master was *Hjalmar Söderberg*, who both in his critical mind and power of detailed psychological observation and in his elegant, highly polished style resembles Henry James. The note that is sustained through all of his novels and short stories is that of boredom or, more accurately, "tristesse."

The pessimism that characterized the "flaneurs" was, of course, rooted in determinism. About 1910, however, the philosophy of Henri Bergson gradually became more generally accepted, and a reaction set in against the "morbid exploration of

stale minds," as it was now termed, of the previous decade. Instead, models were found in Strindberg's naturalistic novels, filled with robust and earthy vitality—a Strindberg little known in this country—and the writers who were not content with throwing moral problems overboard in attempts to give broad and drastic pictures of life were mainly concerned with tracing the evolution of a mind to maturity, treating the problem of free will in the spirit of Bergson.

A writer of major importance who defeats attempts of neat classification in a "movement" or "period" was *Hjalmar Bergman.* Much of his earlier work seems to be in complete accordance with the good-natured realism of the 1910's, but there is already in these frequently humorous novels occasional evidence of a darker and more intensive experience. Gradually a tendency toward the fantastic and macabre becomes more noticeable and his notes and letters prove that his imagination had been filled with surrealist images peopled with grotesque animals ever since his childhood. Thus it is not surprising that in his portrayals of abnormal minds he moves with an instinctive and inevitable certainty that is reminiscent of Dostoevsky (*En döds memoarer*—"Memoirs of a Dead Man"). It is curious that Bergman should also be the man to write the book that heralded "the idyllic twenties," the classic novel of the Swedish provincial town, which also established him as a good-natured and sunny story-teller in the eyes of a public unmindful of the tragic overtones that can be found even in this book (*Markurells i Wadköping*—"The Markurells of Wadköping"). His other novels of the early twenties show an increasing influence of Freudian psychology, the earliest manifestations in Sweden of interest in the new science that was to become of supreme importance about ten years later. In his last novel, which is also the most autobiographical, there is a hidden characterization of his own writing as the only relief for his *Angst*-tormented soul (*Clownen Jac*—"Jac the Clown").

On the whole, Swedish literature seems to have been singularly unaffected by the first world war. There are exceptions like Bergman, to be sure, but in the majority of writers the recovery to

optimism was amazingly quick. In the cases where we do find darker shades, this "neutral" brand of post-war pessimism seems more an aesthetic nausea with the present that has closer affinity with the attitude of the "flaneurs" than with contemporary writing in the countries that had been in the war. If we are to judge by its literature, the decade 1920-'30 in Sweden does indeed deserve the epithet "idyllic."

Its apotheosis is the early poetry and prose of *Birger Sjöberg*. Here again is the glorification of bourgeois life in a provincial town, observed with friendly irony, but yet seen as essentially good. He set his own poems to music and made veritably triumphant recitation tours throughout Sweden, creating an immense popularity which still remains fifteen years after his death. But the really interesting part of his production is his later poetry, as mental decomposition slowly set in, where he gave vent to his torments as a "galley slave on the Society Lake of life." With the same instinctive surrealism shown by Bergman, he turned the society that he had previously depicted in such a friendly fashion into a landscape of horror, the well-known types of the bourgeoisie into monsters of respectability sitting in judgment. The hollowness of the idyll has never been more clearly evident.

The optimism of the early thirties has a new and more constructive aspect. 1930 was the year of the great exhibition in Stockholm which heralded the coming of a functionalism that in various forms has dominated Swedish architecture ever since. The Social Democrats came into power again after a decade of Liberal and Conservative governments. Apostles of Freud and Nietzsche were preaching their doctrines with youthful enthusiasm. The "proletarian" writers who one after the other made their debuts came as a fresh influx into the literary life. All these different aspects made up a composite picture that is very different from the optimism of the twenties, which had mainly been a state of satisfaction with the already established.

The two great names are Freud and his interpreter, D. H. Lawrence, and in no one is their influence more marked than in *Artur Lundkvist*, the poet and main theorist of the group. A few

lines from one of his early poems in rough translation may serve to indicate his general tendency:

> What are symphonies, sonatas, Beethoven, Schubert—?
> But a negro with a saxophone!
> but jazz to soothe your pains and give relief to your hearts!
>
> Play, negro, black brother!
> You new Christ, save us with your shining saxophone!
> Light the flame in our flesh,
> give us the first hot pleasure and the scent of morning in the fields—

But the primitivists are not a homogeneous group; other facets of the movement are industrial romanticism, *Kultur*-pessimism, collectivism, and individualism—opposing tendencies that bear the germs of rapid dissolution. The admiration for the black race, of which Lundkvist's poem is but one of several examples, is founded in the Spenglerian theory of the primitive races as the bearers of the lost vitality. But Splenglerian determinism leads to "Untergang des Abendlandes," and many individual writers were to traverse the short road from hectic optimism to disillusioned pessimism.

History was to quicken the pace; it was but three years to 1933. That same year the first Swedish writer took a definite stand for the "fighting humanism",—*Pär Lagerkvist* in his remarkable play *Bödeln* ("The Hangman"). It earned him the distinction of becoming one of the first foreign writers to be banned in Nazi Germany. He had travelled a long road before arriving at his masterpiece—early naivistic poetry, a period in which he was one of the few Swedish writers to be seriously affected by the war, impressions from Strindbergian symbolism and German expressionism, and a long period of relative optimism when he wrote mainly love poems of delight in the simple life. The play ingeniously parallels a scene in a Mediaeval inn and in a modern night club; through both of the two acts the hangman in his red clothes sits silently waiting, the mystical symbol of brute power and destruction, the centre of the men's secret envy and the women's desire. Not until the end of the second act does he rise, preparing himself once again to fulfill his tragic fate; the "second coming"

is drawing near. "I have been with you since the beginning and I shall follow you until your time is up." His long speech is the mightiest prophetic poem in Swedish; it has the grandeur and conviction of a Biblical prophecy, a veritable *mene tekel* for Western civilization. "The earth lies feverish and hot, sick birds are screaming in the air. The hangman's time is here!"

Not all writers could define their position so clearly. Some were driven to absolute pessimism, others sought refuge in Newmanesque religiosity, many were seemingly unaware of or deliberately ignored the approach of war. The "proletarian" writers continued laboriously to paint their panoramas of social reportage, popular novels were ground out in ever increasing numbers. A few novelists rise above the general mediocrity. *Agnes von Krusenstierna*'s whole production shows preoccupation with the problems of love. Set in a milieu of decadent gentry, her novels have an intense and penetrating psychological insight. The same psychological interest characterizes *Eyvind Johnson*, whose background is the exact opposite. He started as one of the "proletarians," and probably his best work is an autobiographical novel where the forming of a young man's character is portrayed with extreme keenness. During the war years he has proven himself in numberless articles, radio speeches and the vast trilogy *Krilon*—in which history is telescoped into the lives of a small group of Stockholm merchants —as one of the staunchest and ablest men in the "fighting humanism." *Olle Hedberg*, the most popular of the three, is a major stylist in the tradition of Hjalmar Söderberg, whose brief and pointed style he has successfully developed. He is the unequalled portrayer of the haute bourgeoisie; he treats his subjects delicately but with absolutely deadly irony.

Among the poets, whose medium is by nature more acute and more apt to register attitudes and tendencies, the sense of approaching war and impending disaster is much more clearly manifest. They fall outside the realm of this article, but it should be recorded that there is an unbroken line from "The Hangman" on of a poetry of protest and warning, the voices of the irreconcilable.

In a discussion of Swedish literature during recent years, it

should be remembered that up to about 1943 Sweden was in constant danger of being drawn into the war, a war that could not be expected to mean anything but destruction. Under the circumstances it is surprising that such a large proportion of the people could view the overthrow of one small nation after the other with such apparent indifference. This is not to be taken as proof of defeatism or latent collaborationism; it is due only to a tragic shortcoming of imagination. "Complacency is the English disease," says Cyril Connolly, but it is equally true of Sweden and, indeed, of America. A very large number of poets and prose writers saw it as their duty to try to overcome this complacent attitude by the violence of shock, to prepare the public mind for what might come. It would be unfair to judge the creations that are the results of such attempts by aesthetic standards; they were tools and weapons whose value lay in their immediate effectiveness.

Two novels that were published at the same time during the darkest period of the war provide an interesting contrast. *Vilhelm Moberg*'s *Rid i natt!* ("Ride Tonight!") belongs definitely to the "literature of preparation." Set in the 17th century, it portrayed a local, brief and hopeless rebellion against feudal tyranny, the fight for a cause that is lost again and again but will some time in the future be ultimately victorious. The allegory was certainly not missed by any of its readers. The other novel was also historical, also best-selling but the likeness ends there. *Frans G. Bengtsson*'s *Röde Orm* ("Red Orm"), the story of the picaresque adventures of a young Viking, has none of the implications and overtones of Moberg's novel; it is straight and vigorous story-telling in the tradition of Stevenson. This martial phantasy was received with strange enthusiasm.

Much deeper perception than that in any "primer for combat" of the problems that were terribly exposed by the war is to be found in Pär Lagerkvist's novel *Dvärgen* ("The Dwarf")*. It can be interpreted on several different levels: as a broad picture of Italy during the Renaissance, as an allegory of contemporary events, although much more hidden than "Ride Tonight!", or as

* Published in this country as *The Dwarf*, L. B. Fischer Inc., 1945.

a picture of the eternal struggle in man's soul, dramatized in the outside forces influencing the Prince. The Dwarf is much more terrible than the Hangman, who had the tragic dignity of fate, an impersonal force to which we must bow; the corrupt, unsmiling, evil Dwarf, however, is within ourselves—when the book ends he is thrown into the dungeon, but he sits there patiently waiting, confident that soon the Prince will come down and free him from his chains.

Sweden never had to enter the war. Her economy was seriously disturbed, and international confidence in her shaken, but these are things that will disappear. More serious to the individual is the sense of frustration, the sense of being disqualified by having to admit that others fought the fight that was ours too. Perhaps rooted in this sense is the "vitalist" movement, to which many of the youngest generation of writers belong. What they stress above all is the necessity for intensity in experience, of squeezing out of it, regardless of what the experience may be, the utmost intensity. Other discernible features in the picture of current Swedish literature are the tendency of former "proletarian" writers (e.g. Vilhelm Moberg) to disavow adherence to Social Democracy in disgust with the policy during the war and thus to become independent of party doctrines; the acceptance on the part of some of the younger men of Sartre's existentialist philosophy; and, perhaps, a new romanticism. Perhaps some proof of the latter tendency may be seen in the award by the Swedish Academy of the Nobel prize not to T. S. Eliot, as had been hoped, but to Gabriela Mistral, the Chilean poetess. Luckily, the decisions that Academies make seldom reflect the true state of a country's literature. A flight into regionalism would be fatal; what is needed is the exact opposite: internationalism.

Note: Since this article was written, the 1946 Nobel prize for literature has been awarded to Hermann Hesse. No more than the award to Gabriela Mistral does this constitute a recognition of formative forces in the literature of the contemporary world; it is rather an expression of gratitude for services rendered in the past.

SELECTED NOTICES

THE ERANOS CONFERENCES

BY J. M. HONDIUS

THE ERANOS CONFERENCES have been held at Ascona, on the Swiss border of Lake Maggiore, every summer since 1933. When I attended the Eranos Conference for the first time in 1935, I was already familiar with the Eranos Jahrbücher—the annual volumes in which the lectures delivered by scholars from all over Europe are published. The scholarly manner in which the annual theme under discussion was presented, and the high level of the addresses generally, induced me to travel to Ascona in 1935 and subsequent years, and what I heard there confirmed me in my conclusion that valuable material was here being placed at the disposal not only of archeologist, theologian and psychologist, but also of artist and poet; in short, of all those seeking after a firmer foundation for their attitude towards the problems of life.

Whereas the scientist endeavors to explain the world of reality by means of rational and coherent systems, the poet expresses his thoughts in images and symbols. As far back as tradition reaches, mankind has represented and personified life's problems, as it sees them, in the form of deities and demons or, when linguistic symbols fell short, in such signs as the "tree of life" and the Cross. And while the "gods" revealed to man the spirit of his religion, the poets expressed the divine message in humanly understandable language.

This approach to the reality of life and to its descriptive analysis is more ancient than, and, surely, quite as legitimate as the systematic formulation peculiar to the natural sciences. Years before the Eranos Conferences were first initiated, Dr. C. G. Jung of Zürich, who was among their first speakers, had demonstrated that in his patients' dreams and phantasies, arising from the unconscious, the same symbols and personifications appeared as those which we know from the various religions and beliefs of mankind. The important point about this is that certain psychic problems call forth analogous symbols and personifications everywhere—and these Jung termed archetypes.

These archetypes, which we might also call "primitive images," are not confined to any particular period or part of the world. Scholars who, owing to the specialization so characteristic of modern methods, are familiar with only one field of research—say, that of Indian, American, Egyptian, Christian or Chinese spiritual and religious life—are discovering that in fields of study totally outside their own specialty, analogous deities are active in analogous situations. The function of the Eranos Conferences is to provide a meeting-ground for such scholars, (Eranos, from the Greek, like the better known "symposium," means banquet, spiritual feast) where they may pool their findings and enjoy mutual stimulation and enrichment. Each year one theme is selected for the ten days of lectures.

Thus, in 1936 and 1937, the concept of salvation was dealt with; in 1938, the figure of the "Great Mother" and her cult; in 1939, the symbols of rebirth in the religious imagery of different peoples through the ages; in 1940

and 1941, the concept of the Trinity, and the symbols connected with the Mass and the gnosis; in 1942, the hermetic principle in mythology, gnosis and alchemy; in 1943, the ancient forms of sun-worship and the symbolism of light; in 1944, the mysteries; and, in 1945 and 1946, the concept of Spirit.

The manner in which such a topic is discussed and elucidated from different angles at an Eranos Conference may best be explained by an example: In 1946, the topic "Spirit and Nature" was an extension of the 1945 theme. Among others, Prof. Kerényi, classical archeologist, formerly of Budapest, spoke on "The Goddess Nature"; Prof. K. L. Schmidt, theologian, of the University of Basel, on "Nature and Spirit in the Writings of St. Paul"; Prof. L. Massignon, Islamist, of the Collège de France, on "Nature and Spirit in Islamic Mysticism"; Prof. F. Dessauer, physicist, on "Galileo, Newton and the New Direction of Western Thought"; Dr. Paul Schmitt, historian and writer, on "Goethe and the Natural Sciences"; Prof. C. G. Jung, psychologist, on "The Spirit of Psychology"; Prof. A. Portmann, biologist, University of Basel, on "Biology and the Phenomenon of Spirit"; and Prof. Erwin Schrödinger, physicist, Dublin University, on "The Spirit of Natural Science."

The promoter and organizer of the Eranos Conferences, Mrs. Olga Froebe-Kapteyn, is descended from a family of Netherlands scientists. With great tact and tireless energy she has succeeded in creating this most important forum and in making it grow. Even during the war, notwithstanding the enforced absence of many foreign scholars, Mrs. Froebe was able to maintain a very high cultural level at the Conferences. Moreover, she has brought together at her beautiful old house at Ascona on Lake Maggiore a collection of reproductions of symbolic and archetypal images from the plastic arts all over the world, in which students of archetypal expression-forms in religion, art and symbolism will find a treasure-trove of conveniently ordered material.

Although the texts of the various lectures are printed in the Eranos Year Books (Rhein Verlag, Zürich) these volumes cannot, of course, convey to the reader an adequate impression of the extraordinary atmosphere prevailing at the meetings. As a result of the close mutual contact, not only the audiences but also the speakers themselves become aware of the existence of problems and forces the relevance of which to their special fields, they had previously failed to take into account. They, too, go home mentally enriched, and in not a few cases their work has benefited from the impetus given by the new perspectives opened at each Conference. The nations of the world are striving to get together on the political front; for the past decade and a half the Eranos meetings have represented a uniquely successful effort to transcend on the intellectual and spiritual fronts, the barriers of nationality, language and race, East and West.*

---

* Editors' Note: The theme of the next Eranos Conference, to be held in the latter part of August, 1947, is "Der Mensch" ("Man").